

Title	'Safe space' beyond body : a co-creative studio-based practice framework to foster choreographers' creativity
Sub Title	
Author	徐, 雨茗(Xu, Yuming) 佐藤, 千尋(Sato, Chihiro)
Publisher	慶應義塾大学大学院メディアデザイン研究科
Publication year	2025
Jtitle	
JaLC DOI	
Abstract	
Notes	修士学位論文. 2025年度メディアデザイン学 第1197号
Genre	Thesis or Dissertation
URL	https://koara.lib.keio.ac.jp/xoonips/modules/xoonips/detail.php?koara_id=KO40001001-00002025-1197

慶應義塾大学学術情報リポジトリ(KOARA)に掲載されているコンテンツの著作権は、それぞれの著作者、学会または出版社/発行者に帰属し、その権利は著作権法によって保護されています。引用にあたっては、著作権法を遵守してご利用ください。

The copyrights of content available on the KeiO Associated Repository of Academic resources (KOARA) belong to the respective authors, academic societies, or publishers/issuers, and these rights are protected by the Japanese Copyright Act. When quoting the content, please follow the Japanese copyright act.

Master's Thesis
Academic Year 2025

‘Safe Space’ beyond Body: A Co-creative
Studio-Based Practice Framework to Foster
Choreographers’ Creativity



Keio University
Graduate School of Media Design

Yuming Xu

A Master's Thesis
submitted to Keio University Graduate School of Media Design
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Media Design

Yuming Xu

Master's Thesis Advisory Committee:

Associate Professor Chihiro Sato	(Main Research Supervisor)
Professor Masa Inakage	(Sub Research Supervisor)

Master's Thesis Review Committee:

Associate Professor Chihiro Sato	(Chair)
Professor Masa Inakage	(Co-Reviewer)
Associate Professor Ryuma Shineha	(Co-Reviewer)

Abstract of Master's Thesis of Academic Year 2025

‘Safe Space’ beyond Body: A Co-creative Studio-Based
Practice Framework to Foster Choreographers’ Creativity

Category: Design

Summary

In today’s evolving dance ecosystem, dancers are no longer limited to performing choreography. They are increasingly expected to act as creators who possess structural thinking, cross-disciplinary communication skills, and the capacity for sustained innovation and creativity. Responding to these expanded demands, this research introduces a structured co-creative practice framework which is called ‘Safe Space’ beyond Body, that supports choreographic creativity through mixed modes intervention, drawing.

Conducted in Yokohama, Japan, this study adopts an autoethnographic and participatory design approach to explore how dancers can develop creative thinking not just through spontaneous inspiration but through daily, supported practice. The findings reveal that this intervention drawing in co-creative setting enhances reflective thinking, visual imagination, and emotional expression while fostering autonomy, competence, and relatedness, in line with Self-Determination Theory (SDT).

Furthermore, the research contributes a practical framework that choreographers can adapt to various collaborative contexts, enabling them to safely break habitual patterns, experiment across disciplines, and sustain creative growth.

Keywords:

choreography, mixed modes, safe space, dance education, autoethnography

Keio University Graduate School of Media Design

Yuming Xu

Contents

Acknowledgements	viii
1 Introduction	1
1.1. Background	1
1.2. Research Challenge and Motivation	2
1.3. Overview	3
2 Related Works	5
2.1. Co-creativity in Choreographic Practice	5
2.1.1 What is Choreography?	5
2.1.2 Creativity	6
2.1.3 Co-Creativity and Participation	8
2.1.4 Self-Determination Theory	9
2.1.5 Safe Space and Art	10
2.2. Mixed Modes in Dance	11
2.2.1 Case Study 1 — Boiling Mind	11
2.2.2 Case Study 2 — Multimodal Human Emotion/ Expression Recognition	12
2.2.3 Drawing Mode	13
2.3. Community Based Dance Sharing and Development	14
2.3.1 Sense of Community	14
2.3.2 Art Residencies	15
2.4. Research Contribution	16
3 Design	17
3.1. Overview of this Research Journey	17
3.2. Phase One: Understanding the Landscape of Dance Creation . . .	17

3.2.1	Methodology: From Inquiry to Imagination	17
3.2.2	Individual Dancer Interviews	20
3.2.3	Space Observations	29
3.2.4	Production Team Conversations	39
3.2.5	Towards Research Design — Reframing the Creative Journey	50
3.3.	Phase Two: Prototyping Mixed Modes Expression, A Participatory Design	52
3.3.1	Ideation and Pilot: Drawing Meets Dance	52
3.3.2	Insights Deliver to Final Design	60
3.4.	‘Safe Space’ Beyond Body: A Studio-Based Practice Framework	61
3.4.1	Method	61
3.4.2	Setting	62
3.4.3	Expected Choreography Outcomes	67
4	Validation	69
4.1.	Methodology	69
4.2.	Evaluation Premise	72
4.2.1	Application of Self-Determination Theory	72
4.2.2	Five Components	73
4.3.	Participant Recruitment	74
4.4.	Observation in The Three Workshops	76
4.4.1	1st Workshop — Dancer 1 and 2	76
4.4.2	2nd Workshop — Dancer 1 and 3	84
4.4.3	3rd Workshop — Dancer 1 and 4	89
4.4.4	Comparative Review of Workshop Results	92
4.5.	Insights from Different Actors	92
4.6.	Discussion	97
5	Conclusion	100
5.1.	Conclusion	100
5.2.	Limitations	101
5.3.	Future Directions	102

References	103
-------------------	------------

Appendices	110
-------------------	------------

A. Choreographic Results Final Workshop Performance Recording . .	110
---	-----

List of Figures

1.1	Research Model	4
2.1	A Basic Approach Using Improvisation in Choreography(Dance-making)	8
3.1	Primary Data — Research Landscape	19
3.2	Individual Interviews	20
3.3	Dancing Development Logic Cycle	27
3.4	Understanding about Dance and the Role in Dance	28
3.5	Dace Base Yokohama	31
3.6	Yokohama International Performing Arts Meeting (YPAM) Map	33
3.7	YPAM Centre at Koganecho	33
3.8	Koganecho Area Map	35
3.9	Koganecho Area	35
3.10	Kocogarden Concept	36
3.11	Kocogarden Photos	37
3.12	Project Based Interview Overview	40
3.13	Pangu and Me	42
3.14	An Interactive Physical Performance Team Overview	43
3.15	The Communication State of Dancers Within A Team	44
3.16	Infinite Jest and Me	45
3.17	Creative Choreography — Dance Phase	48
3.18	Ideal Condition for An Interactive Physical Performance	49
3.19	Choreographic Challenges Across Studio, Rehearsal, and Performance Contexts	51
3.20	Kocogarden Pilot Choreography Workshop Poster	54
3.21	Kocogarden Pilot Choreography Workshop	55

3.22	Pilot Choreography Workshop Creative Notation from The Lead Choreographer	55
3.23	Pilot Choreography Workshop Choreographic Material from The Lead Choreographer	56
3.24	Pilot Choreography Workshop Audiences' (Co-choreographers') Outcomes	57
3.25	Final Design Poster and Lists of Participators	62
3.26	Final Design — Flow	63
3.27	Final Design Environment Overview — Media Studio	64
3.28	Final Design — Stage Setting	64
3.29	Final Design — Music Setting	65
3.30	Final Design — Equipments and Materials	66
3.31	Final Workshop Outcomes — Choreographic Work	68
3.32	Final Workshop Outcomes — Creative Sketches	68
4.1	Four Contextual Design Models Data Overview	71
4.2	Final Workshop Flow Map — Where The Verification (Five Components) Took Place	75
4.3	Final Workshop Dancer 1 — Author Background Profile	77
4.4	Final Workshop Dancer 2 — M.H. Background Profile	78
4.5	Final Workshop Dancer 3 — N.H. Background Profile	79
4.6	Final Workshop Dancer 4 — O.A. Background Profile	80
4.7	1st Final Workshop Observation by using Four Contextual Design Model	82
4.8	1st Final Workshop — Creative Sketches	83
4.9	2nd Final Workshop Observation by using Four Contextual Design Model	86
4.10	2nd Final Workshop — Creative Sketches	87
4.11	3rd Final Workshop Observation by using Four Contextual Design Model	90
4.12	3rd Final Workshop — Creative Sketches	91
4.13	Comparative Review of Workshop Results	93
5.1	Deliver for The Future	102

List of Tables

4.1	Design Principles Observed in Workshop 1	84
4.2	Design Principles Observed in Workshop 2	88
4.3	Design Principles Observed in Workshop 3	92

Acknowledgements

First and foremost, I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to Professor Chihiro Sato. She has always listened attentively to my evolving ideas, provided thoughtful feedback, and offered unwavering support throughout this journey.

I would also like to extend my sincere thanks to my sub-supervisor, Professor Masa Inakage, for posing many thought-provoking and critical questions that helped sharpen the academic focus of this research.

Thank you to all the dancer artists who supported this research by generously sharing their time, experiences, and talent. I am especially grateful to the supportive communities and teams that made this work possible, including the Dance Base Yokohama team, AWPlanet team, Pangu production team, Koganecho art community, and artist Steve Frost from Kocogarden. I also deeply appreciate the dancers from around the world who took the time to speak with me during interviews, as well as my three collaborative dancers, Mano Hatanaka, Nana Horikawa, and Otaki Ayano.

Thank you to the ITOMA group, and to every senpai, peer, and junior who have walked alongside me. They have been the best teammates.

Thank you to Yih-Hwai Chuang. His emotional support during both my dance journey and thesis writing process helped me find the clarity and patience to express myself sincerely.

To my family, my parents, elders, aunts and uncles, and our four beloved dogs, their love and encouragement have been the foundation of my strength.

And finally, to myself. I am deeply proud and grateful for how far I have come. These past two years have been the most emotionally challenging time in my life, during which I strived to understand and navigate many wicked problems.

Thank you all, from the bottom of my heart.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1. Background

As a performance art form, dancing emerges through the practices of both dance and choreography, two concepts that while interconnected, have different definitions. Dance refers to the physical ability to move expressively and aesthetically, either independently or through guidance. On the other hand, choreography involves a deeper layer of creative authorship, which invites the dancer to infuse movement with personal thought, innovation, and narrative intent. [1] A person who is able to embody their own ideas in movement and construct original sequences is often seen as a choreographer, someone who not only possesses the ability to dance, but also demonstrates a specific artistic voice within the choreographic process. When a dancer skillfully integrates multiple styles or genres in their choreographic work, they begin to operate not just as a performer, but as a choreographic artist in their own right.

As one of the expressive art forms, dancing not only reflects individual creativity but also serves as a powerful medium for cultural representation, embodying the identity of a person, a community, a city, or even a nation. Unlike more text or image based art forms such as writing, drawing, or filmmaking, contemporary dance often integrates multiple disciplines, visual art, music, theatre, to communicate through a universal language: non-verbal expression.

Creative choreography plays a vital role not only in a dancer's personal development, but also in the broader experience of the audience. Through innovation in choreography, artists can provoke new emotional responses, raise questions, and expand how movement is perceived and understood. However, in today's globalized world, individuals are often surrounded by algorithm-driven digital environments that limit the diversity of information and inspiration they receive. As

Tadashi Suzuki noted in the book *Culture is the body*, “*The role of the artist in society is to create opportunities for people to re-sensitize themselves to the world, to awaken their imagination, and to live in uncertainty.*” In this sense, creative choreographers are uniquely positioned to challenge dominant narratives and offer alternative ways of seeing and feeling. By generating dialogue through embodied performance, they help audiences break free from outcome-oriented thinking and re-engage with the world in more imaginative, open-ended ways. [2]

In a world increasingly shaped by digital communication and cultural exchange, the ability to develop innovative choreography is essential, not only for transmitting ideas beyond words but also for contributing to the sustainable evolution of human culture through embodied, creative practice.

1.2. Research Challenge and Motivation

In today’s choreographic landscape, dancers face increasingly complex challenges that extend beyond technical training. As contemporary dance continues to cross traditional disciplinary boundaries, blending with installation art, immersive storytelling, and theatrical narrative, dancers are now expected to collaborate across mediums, interpret abstract themes, and understand spatial and conceptual dramaturgy. Dance has become a hybrid language, one that integrates perception, narrative, space, and technology.

At the same time, the modes of dance dissemination are undergoing fundamental transformation. The global rise of K-pop and the viral spread of dance challenges on social media have dramatically increased dance visibility and participation. While this phenomenon has expanded the audience and sparked widespread interest, it has also led to the risk of homogenization, where creativity may be overshadowed by formulaic replication.

For dancers with strong bodily capacity who wish to pursue dance as a professional trajectory, whether as project participants, independent choreographers, or educators, there is a growing need for supportive, stimulating creative ecosystems. These ecosystems should offer access to diverse information, inclusive and experimental spaces, and a psychologically safe environment that allows dancers to take risks, discover their voice, and sustain motivation. Moreover, these spaces must

foster collaboration and community, enabling dancers to continuously explore and grow in response to the changing demands of the field.

This study aims to explore how mixed modes workshop design and participatory co-creation processes can support dancers' creative expression and development in a rapidly shifting choreographic landscape.

1. The Research Question: "How to help the choreographer build creativity, not just wait for inspiration, but grow it through practice and support?"
2. The Hypothesis: Creative choreographic thinking can be cultivated through structured co-creative practices and mixed modes interventions such as drawing, which help dancers break habitual patterns, feel more autonomous, and discover new collaborative dynamics.

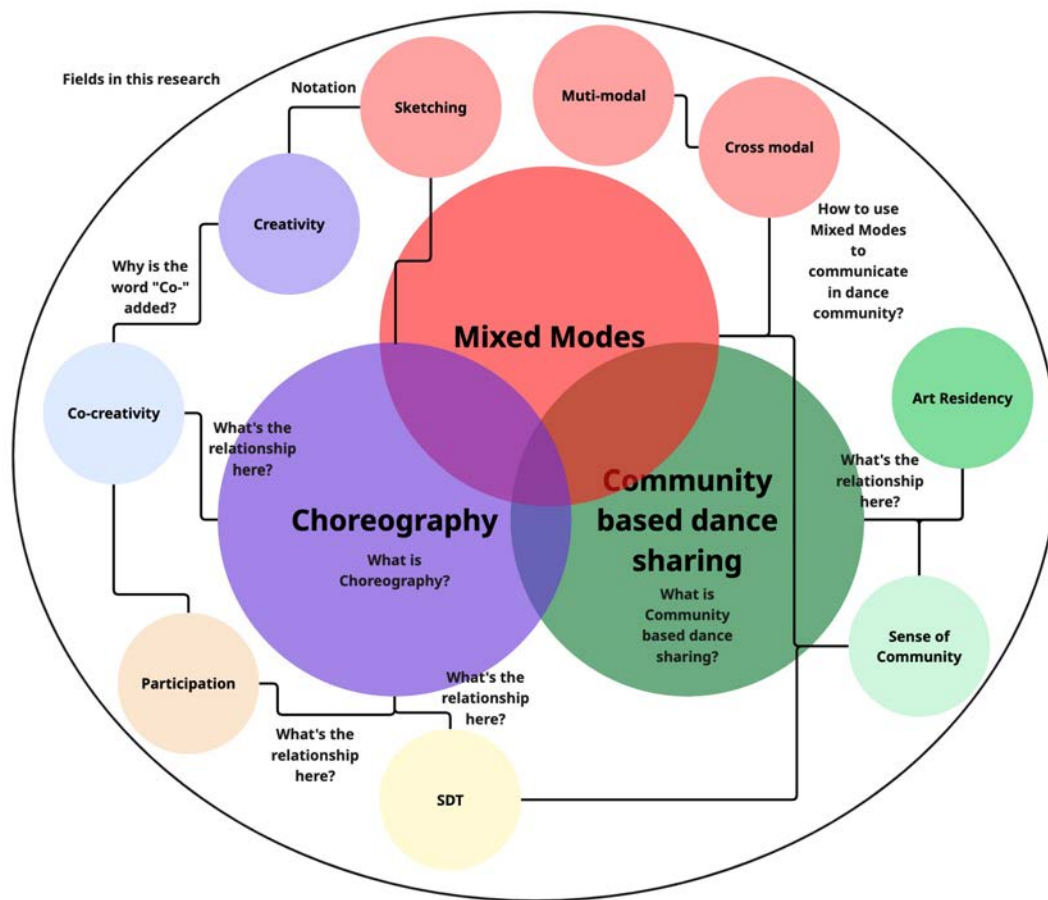
Through these aims, the research seeks not only to respond to the practical challenges faced by dancers, but also to contribute a participatory design approach that may inform future interdisciplinary dance education and choreographic practice.

1.3. Overview

This thesis is structured to guide the reader through a research journey that begins with theoretical grounding and contextual inquiry, and moves toward the design, implementation, and reflection of a mixed modes intervention aimed at supporting dancers' creativity.

Chapter 2 provides my research model on the literature review [Fig 1.1] that covers key concepts such as choreography, creative thinking, co-creation, self-determination theory (SDT), and mixed modes practices in dance, while also situating the research within the broader context of community-based art and intercultural performance.

Chapter 3 introduces the research design process, beginning with interviews, observations, and project-based participation that help reframe the creative challenges dancers face. These insights lead to the design of a mixed modes co-creation workshop, which is implemented first in a pilot and then in a final version.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 1.1 Research Model

Chapter 4 presents the validation process, applying SDT as a framework to examine how the design supported dancers' autonomy, competence, and relatedness. It introduces five key components that emerged from the workshop and explores how these elements influenced the participants' creative behaviors and reflections.

Finally, Chapter 5 concludes with a critical reflection on the research outcomes, discusses its limitations, and outlines possible future directions for applying participatory and mixed modes approaches in dance education and interdisciplinary creative practices.

Chapter 2

Related Works

2.1. Co-creativity in Choreographic Practice

2.1.1 What is Choreography?

“The process of becoming a choreographer involved a shift from interpreting others’ visions to formulating and exploring my own ideas in movement.” [3]

Choreography, which is also called as dance-making, is not merely the arrangement of steps, but a process that fuses bodily sensation with intentional structure. It is a practice that happens within the body as much as it happens through design. The choreographer’s task is not only to organize movement but to let it happen, shape it, and discover its meaning in collaboration with the dancer’s embodied intelligence.

The question of what choreography is has been explored from philosophical, perceptual, technical, and pedagogical perspectives. Across various literature, choreography emerges not as a fixed formula, but as a nuanced and layered practice that involves both embodied experience and structural construction.

“While everything in choreography comes by design, everything designed comes into the choreography by chance.” Beiswanger argues that choreography, like any other art form, is a matter of construction, that is an act of design. However, he complicates this notion by proposing that chance and design are not opposites but interdependent forces. [4] In other words, while choreography is consciously shaped, its actual emergence often relies on unexpected discoveries and spontaneous bodily responses. Good choreography, then, is not merely about control, but about how form arises through the interplay of design and accident.

This idea is further deepened by Sally Gardner, where she argues that choreography does not only happen through the external arrangement of movement, as

if choreographers are “**writing on paper**”, but rather through internal bodily perception. Especially in ballet, is already inscribed within the trained body of the dancer. In contemporary dance, this means that the dancer is not merely a vessel but a co-creator, and choreography becomes an embodied exchange, not an imposed structure. [5]

From a pedagogical standpoint, Jacqueline Smith-Autard strongly emphasizes the importance of “**craft**” in choreography. In *Teaching Choreography: Beginning with Craft*, she defines choreography as “*the craft of constructing and organizing a dance work.*” This includes conscious editing, structuring, and developing of movement to communicate expressive intent. According to her, effective choreography relies on the mastery of what she calls a “**dance grammar system**”, which includes: [6] Action content (walking, jumping, turning etc.), Use of space (directions, levels, groupings etc.), Dynamics (speed, weight, energy, flow etc.), Form (repetition, contrast, variation, transitions etc.).

Jacqueline Smith-Autard emphasizes that choreography is a conscious process of organizing movement into a structure that conveys expression. Unlike improvisation, which is spontaneous, open-ended, and immediate, choreography requires deliberate structuring, reflection, and ongoing refinement. [7] Jan Van Dyke further argues that while improvisation is a valuable tool in early dance education, helping students discover their personal movement vocabulary and creative impulses, it is not sufficient on its own. Without a solid grasp of choreographic structure, spatial design, development, and form, students’ work may appear fragmented or directionless. She stresses that dancers must first learn the craft of choreography in order to transform raw ideas into meaningful and original choreographic works. [6]

Similarly, Minton’s research as an invitation to discover expressive possibilities through movement, encouraging a balance between exploration and intentional design. [8]

2.1.2 Creativity

Choreography is inherently a creative process that requires both practice and an understanding of how creativity functions. Although creativity plays a central role in advancing science, art, society, and technology, creativity is still difficult

to define. The concept remains open to multiple interpretations. It can be understood as a process of gradually finding a solution to a problem, one that involves both rational and intuitive thinking strategies. [9] For example, Creativity is now understood as a developable and structured process. [6]

In modern and postmodern dance traditions, improvisation plays a vital role in developing creativity. It is not only an entry point into the choreographic process but also a means for students to connect with their authentic selves and discover their unique artistic voices. As Smith-Autard asserts creativity does not occur as a singular moment of inspiration, but rather as a sustained process involving reflection, revision, and development. In her words, *“creativity is not a moment of sudden illumination, but a process that grows through critique, retrospection, and transformation. It begins in improvisation but also transcends it.”* [7]

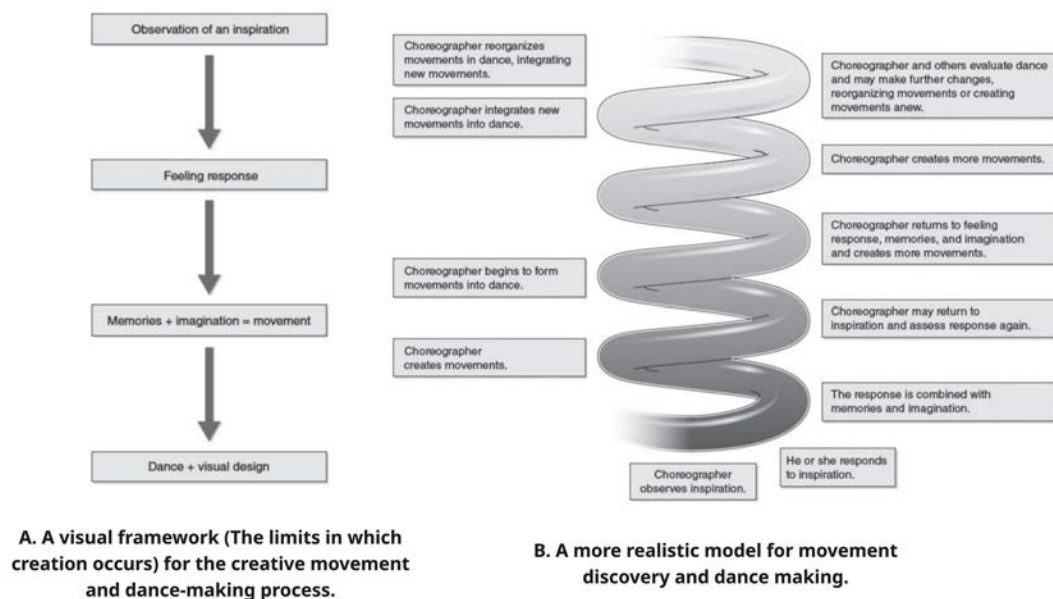
Sandra Minton outlines a five-stage model of creativity and a model for the creative movement and dance-making process in her book which offers a framework that is particularly relevant to dance makers: [8] Preparation, Incubation, Aha Experience, Evaluation, Elaboration.

However, creativity in choreography is not synonymous with improvisation alone. As Smith-Autard emphasizes, creativity is demonstrated through the application of choreographic craft, the ability to manipulate and organize movement elements such as action, space, dynamics, and form. Creativity in dance therefore entails the transformation of inner feeling and ideas into structured movement language. [10]

In Dou, Li and Jia’s study analyzing the creative and innovative thinking abilities of choreographers, the authors argue that these cognitive skills positively correlate with the quality of dance creation. They emphasize that creativity isn’t an innate talent only. Rather, it must be cultivated through continuous, daily practice and reflection. [11]

In dance education, students must first develop an understanding of this choreographic grammar. Only then can they begin to cultivate true originality. Creativity, in this context, is about breaking rules with purpose, knowing the system well enough to subvert it meaningfully. As such, creativity in choreography can be summarized as: Creativity = Craft + Expression + Transformation. [6]

Far from being arbitrary or spontaneous, creativity is a discipline of structure



(Source: [8])

Figure 2.1 A Basic Approach Using Improvisation in Choreography(Dance-making)

and imagination, grounded in both technical skill and artistic intent.

2.1.3 Co-Creativity and Participation

Creativity and participation are two essential concepts in choreography. The notion of participation is open to multiple interpretations and has been widely discussed in the context of human–computer interaction and collaborative art-making [12]. In contrast, co-creativity is a relatively recent new term. In fact, it has not yet been included in the Oxford English Dictionary. However, it is increasingly used in academic and artistic discourse and related to concepts such as collaboration, participation, and co-design.

As Zeilig et al. explains, co-creativity is not only about the joint production of an artwork. It is also about co-experiencing an open-ended, improvisational, and relational artistic process, which places emphasis on mutuality and the unfolding of meaning together, rather than on outcomes or product [13].

In the field of dance education, Chappell's work builds on Craft's concept of creativity in relationship, and John-Steiner's work on creative collaboration. Together, they articulate a model of creativity as occurring across three interrelated levels: individual, collaborative, and communal creativity, all of which are embodied, social, and situated in relational practice [14].

To emphasize how creativity in choreography emerges through the dancer's embodied negotiation with structure and environment, Klein reframes choreographic creativity not as a fixed trait or spontaneous moment, but as a distributed process situated within the interaction of bodies, systems, and spatial constraints. [15] This resonates strongly with choreoecological views, the development of the dancer, whether as a biological individual, a social actor, or a member of a collective, cannot be separated from the interaction with their environment and the co-constructive nature of that relationship [16].

Katan's enactivist model reframes creativity as something that emerges through embodied interaction, rather than internal planning. Central to this is co-regulation, the ongoing, mutual adjustment between dancers as they respond to each other in real time. In this view, co-creativity is not a solo act but a shared, dynamic process of sense-making in motion. [17]

Spector et al.'s research highlights the idea that participation is not merely a means but the very starting point of meaning-making. He gave the example of a paper about students that generated questions from hands-on experimentation before being exposed to explanation. Which reversal that made knowledge meaningful because it emerged from personal, embodied experience. [18]

Thus, co-creativity in dance can be understood as both a socially relational and structurally embedded phenomenon: it arises through collaborative interaction and through the reconfiguration of aesthetic, bodily, and spatial orders, making dance not only a form of art-making but a mode of worldmaking.

2.1.4 Self-Determination Theory

Self-Determination Theory (SDT), initially developed by Deci and Ryan, offers a widely recognized framework for understanding motivation across various domains, including education, sports, and more recently, dance. The theory centers on three fundamental psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and related-

ness, which are essential for cultivating intrinsic motivation and overall psychological well-being. Autonomy refers to experiencing a sense of volition and self-direction in one's actions; competence involves feeling effective and skilled in one's activities; and relatedness reflects the need for meaningful connection and mutual appreciation in social contexts. [19]

Applying this framework to dance, Quested and Duda emphasize that when dancers experience support for these core needs, they are more likely to develop a positive and stable sense of self-worth. Moreover, such environments foster long-term motivation, emotional resilience, and creative growth. Their findings suggest that SDT-based approaches can play a critical role not only in sustaining participation, but also in enriching dancers' creative expression and psychological development. [20]

Extending this idea to pedagogy, Spector et al. advocate for a shift in the teacher's role, from simply conveying technique to actively facilitating personal meaning-making. In dance education, this means creating spaces where learners are encouraged to recognize their own values, act autonomously, and connect deeply with others. Such an approach aligns closely with SDT principles, highlighting how autonomy, supportive teaching can lead to more engaged, empowered, and expressive dancers. [18]

2.1.5 Safe Space and Art

Safe space is a crucial part of the creative process, and art helps to create it. [21] [22]

Henri Lefebvre's notion of space as socially produced, emphasizes that a safe space is not merely a site of emotional protection, but a processual and performative environment shaped by social relationships and artistic practice. Within the context of performance and community work, such performative safe spaces not only support conflict transformation and peace-building but also allow for aesthetic and sociocultural tensions to emerge. In doing so, they become generative spaces where new possibilities, what does not yet exist, can take form. Rather than being limited to a protective role, safe space is reframed as a creative and mobilizable force, holding the potential for grassroots cultural co-creation and social change. [23]

The use of art as a methodological and intervention tool has become common in healthcare and therapeutic environments, especially in mental health, where it supports personal development, enhances self and social awareness, and improves functional abilities. [22]

2.2. Mixed Modes in Dance

Mixed modes in dance refer to the use of multiple, interwoven modes of expression, such as drawing, writing, and movement, as creative strategies to activate diverse ways of thinking and imagining.

For dancers, drawing and movement act as visual-kinesthetic modes of expression. In early creation stages, these mixed modes practices help release emotion and share ideas, supporting co-creative choreography. Across disciplines, multi-modal tools, such as visual, spatial, and symbolic forms, enhance cognitive flexibility and deepen engagement in creative problem solving. [9]

2.2.1 Case Study 1 — Boiling Mind

The Boiling Mind¹ project serves as a powerful example of how multimodal interaction can support the communication of emotional and mental states beyond verbal language. This project was specifically designed to connect performers and audiences more deeply. Using an interactive installation, audience members were invited to wear sensors during the performance. Their physical responses, such as vocal intensity, hand gestures, and breathing patterns, were captured in real time and translated into dynamic visual and auditory feedback. These transformations allowed internal, often inexpressible, feelings to be externalized and shared through sensory experience. [24]

This approach offers valuable insight for dance-making, where abstract ideas and emotions must often be expressed nonverbally through movement. It raises the question of how dancers might similarly make their inner worlds visible and audible. In co-creative environments, especially those where language barriers

1 Boiling Mind Project. <https://www.embodiedmedia.org/projects/boiling-mind>. Accessed May 29.

or emotional ambiguity are present, multimodal tools can act as crucial bridges between collaborators. This case highlights an important point: multimodality is not merely a tool for communication, but a catalyst for creativity. By enabling richer and more layered expression, it opens up new possibilities for collaborative artistic processes. [24]

2.2.2 Case Study 2 — Multimodal Human Emotion/ Expression Recognition

A Study of Multimodal Human Emotion/Expression Recognition provides valuable insights into how multimodal systems can be utilized to enhance the expression and recognition of internal emotional states. Although the study was conducted in the context of human-computer interaction (HCI), the results have important implications for understanding nonverbal communication in collaborative creative processes such as choreography. In total, it is represented at four points. [25]

1. Complementarity between modalities Research has pointed out that different emotions have different expressive advantages in different modalities. For example, anger and surprise are more easily recognized through facial expressions, while sadness and fear are more easily expressed through sounds. When visual and auditory signals were combined, the accuracy of emotion recognition increased significantly. This suggests that multimodal expressions are not duplicative but complementary to each other, with each modality assuming a unique level of meaning in the transmission. [25]
2. Enhancing emotional clarity through multimodality

Ambiguity in emotion recognition often occurs in unimodal modalities (e.g., anger and disgust are easily confused), but multimodal representations can effectively alleviate this ambiguity. This suggests that when it comes to conveying delicate and complex emotions, the integration of information across modalities can help the precision and clarity of expression, especially in situations where it is difficult to convey the emotion completely in words. [25]

3. Visibility of internal states

Although the system mainly recognizes “external emotions”, the research process has shown that the multimodal approach to externalize subjective and internal mental states into perceptible signals is an important expression mechanism. Multimodal techniques can help individuals to make difficult-to-verbalize experiences understandable and perceptible to others, thus enhancing the possibility of sharing and co-sensing. [25]

4. Individual and cultural adaptation The study also found that participants from different linguistic backgrounds (e.g., Spanish vs. Sinhala speakers) performed differently when using different modalities. In this case study, the authors propose that a multimodal framework can provide individuals from different cultures and expression habits with the freedom to choose the most natural and skillful way of expression, thus reducing misunderstandings and promoting effective communication. [25]

2.2.3 Drawing Mode

Activities such as drawing, dancing, and constructing imaginative worlds are not merely expressive outputs but vital acts of meaning-making and identity-building. Drawing, for example, is more than a storytelling tool, it becomes a vehicle for emotional resonance and self-construction. Marni Binder and Sally Kotsopoulos’s study observed how children repeatedly revisited their drawings, adding or altering elements, which showed how meaning was continuously negotiated and reimaged through visual forms. [26]

Drawing on the philosophy of enactivism, Katan’s Enactivist Model of Improvisational Dance challenges conventional notions of creativity. It emphasizes thinking through doing, dynamic attunement, and co-presence, where choreography is not a fixed representation of thought but emerges through embodied action and interaction. [17] Susan Rosenberg, in her study of postmodern choreographer Trisha Brown, illustrates how visual thinking shaped Brown’s choreographic process. Brown’s notebooks were filled with sketches and diagrams, not as illustrations of dance, but as conceptual tools for envisioning movement. These visual forms helped structure spatial logic, guiding how movement was later embodied. In

Brown's work, visual thinking and movement generation are deeply intertwined, reinforcing drawing as a compositional and cognitive device within dance. [27]

2.3. Community Based Dance Sharing and Development

This section explores the evolving significance of community in contemporary dance and cultural practices. It focuses on how the idea of building a sense of community has gained renewed importance, and how mechanisms such as art residencies and festival events have been designed to foster this sense of belonging and connection.

2.3.1 Sense of Community

McMillan's foundational framework of Sense of Community offers a conceptual lens to better understand and support community, building practices in both research and applied contexts. He defines it as *“a feeling that members have of belonging, a feeling that members matter to one another and to the group, and a shared faith that members' needs will be met through their commitment to be together.”* This concept is composed of four core elements: [28]

Membership

The sense of belonging and identification with a group. It includes boundaries (who is 'in' or 'out'), emotional safety, personal investment, shared symbolic systems (e.g. language, rituals, space), and identification with the group as part of the self.

Influence

Members feel they can affect the group and are also open to being influenced by it. This reciprocal dynamic is central to cohesion and mirrors democratic exchange.

Integration and Fulfillment of Needs

The community serves as a space where members' needs are met through shared values, mutual support, access to resources, and opportunities for growth.

Shared Emotional Connection

Rooted in shared history, frequent interaction, and emotionally positive experiences, these connections are often built beyond language, through embodied and spatial engagement. [28]

These ideas resonate strongly with community dance, which differs from professional dance in its inclusivity of non-trained participants. Rather than being a top-down mode of artistic display, community dance fosters embodied, participatory communication. Expression is not limited to verbal language but takes shape through multimodal channels, movement, rhythm, touch, and spatial interaction. Through dancing, participants not only express themselves, but also engage in attentive “listening” through observation, imitation, and co-movement. When bodily rhythms align and gestures respond mutually, a state of resonance arises, creating a profound sense of being understood and connected. [29]

The COVID-19 pandemic introduced physical distance and disrupted in-person gatherings. Yet, as shown in *Building the Dance Community Virtually During COVID-19* virtual dance communities emerged as alternative spaces where dancers rehearsed together, performed across borders, and cultivated a renewed sense of community. Even in the absence of physical co-presence, new forms of emotional connection, such as being seen, accepted, and synchronized, were generated through digital platforms and shared online practices. [30]

2.3.2 Art Residencies

Artist residency programs emphasize the process of creation over the production of final outcomes. These residencies invite artists to live and work within unfamiliar environments where they can experiment, explore new media, engage in fresh social interactions, and draw inspiration from context. A key concept that defines residencies is “connectivity”, rather than pursuing finished artworks, artists are encouraged to develop meaningful relationships with space, the surrounding com-

munity, and others. Through this, they begin to reconstruct their own cognitive frameworks and artistic identities in response to the new setting. In this sense, the residency becomes more than a site of artistic labor, it becomes a platform for collaboration and co-creation. [31]

Moreover, residencies play a crucial role in the artist's long-term development. They provide a protected, nurturing space in which creativity can flourish. Residencies grant not just physical space and resources, but the gift of time, a pause from daily routines, allowing artists to enter a slower rhythm centered around care and co-presence. During this time, artistic production shifts from being a solitary act to becoming a collective process rooted in multisensory and multimodal interaction. Meaning is generated collectively through image-making, bodily movement, sound, and spatial engagement. Such ongoing co-regulation and deep dialogue form the foundation of community building: within a close-knit structure absent of rigid hierarchies, creativity emerges through shared trust, empathy, and vulnerability. [32]

2.4. Research Contribution

This research contributes to the evolving discourse on how choreographic creativity can be nurtured through mixed modes and participatory design practices. Conducted through the lens of me, a Chinese researcher, collaborating with three Japanese dancers of different stylistic backgrounds. Grounded in Self-determination Theory, the study analyzes how these mixed modes interventions support dancers' experiences of autonomy, competence, and relatedness within the 'Safe' co-creative process. Rather than emphasizing performance outcomes, this research highlights the value of process-based exploration and the importance of emotional safety in sustaining long-term creative motivation.

Chapter 3

Design

3.1. Overview of this Research Journey

This chapter presents how the research evolved from contextual inquiry to the development of a co-creative design method that supports the creative generation of dancers. The design process was not driven solely by observation, but was grounded in the embodied knowledge of the author of dancing, dancemaking, experience in interactive physical theater production, and a synthesis of qualitative data collected through interviews and fieldwork.

In this chapter, narrative storytelling is used to bring the research data to life, not simply listing responses, but weaving a picture of how dancers create, what environments they work within, and how their creative cycles unfold. Diagrams and summarized visual data will support this storytelling, offering a structured overview of key phases, pressures, and potentials in the dancer ecosystem. These insights formed the foundation for the design intervention that follows.

Moreover, this chapter follows a trajectory from context and insight to ideation, prototyping, and final workshop implementation, forming a cohesive narrative from understanding to design-based support.

3.2. Phase One: Understanding the Landscape of Dance Creation

3.2.1 Methodology: From Inquiry to Imagination

This research adopts a qualitative methodology **Autoethnography** [33] [34] [35], where knowledge emerges from embodied experience and creative action, rather

than using creative work only to illustrate preexisting theory. This approach is particularly well-suited to performing arts research, where tacit knowledge, sensory experience, improvisation, and collaborative dynamics are central to the creative process. Specifically, the research used the following.

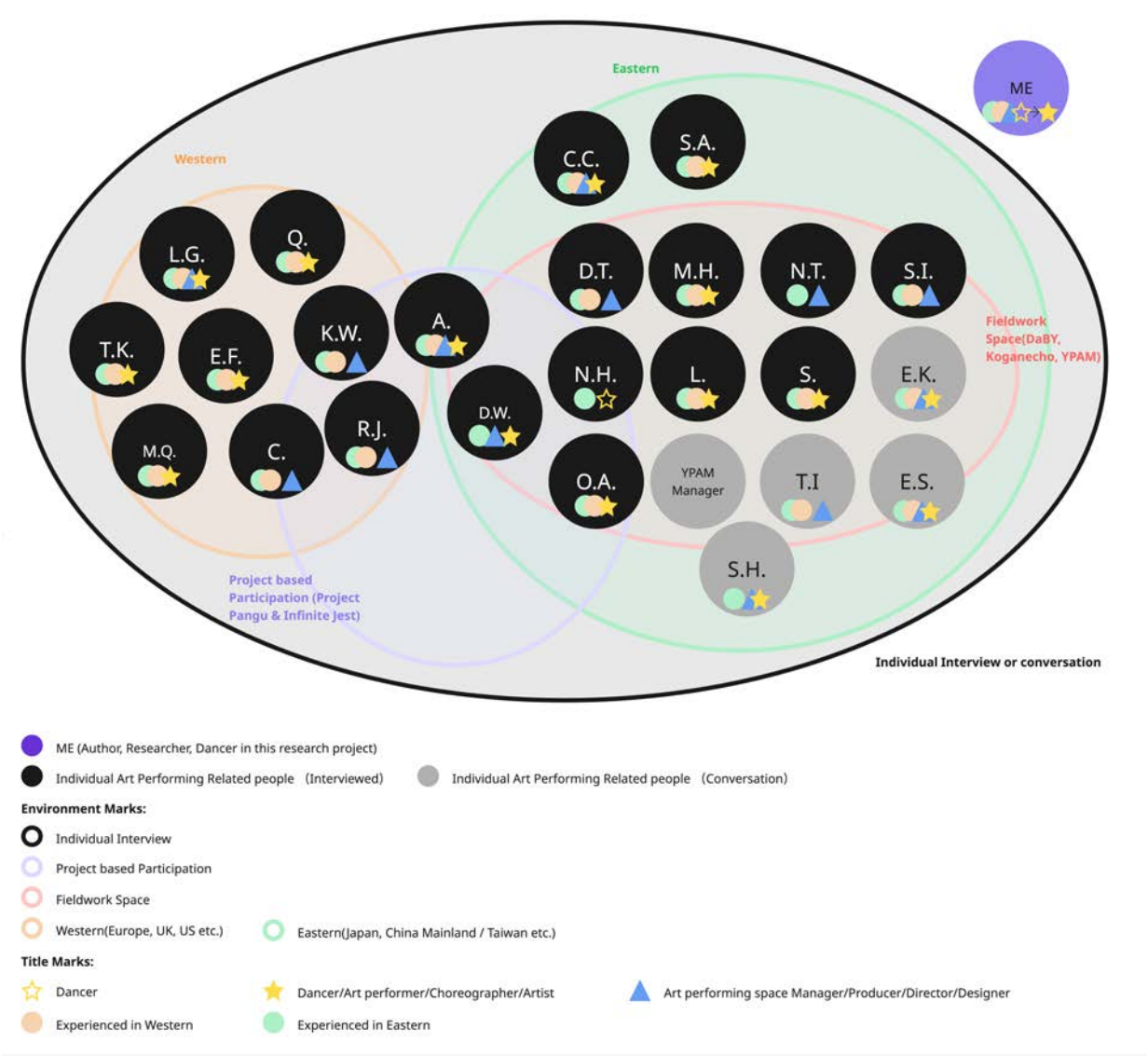
1. **Semi-structured Interviews** [36] with dancers and performing arts professionals to explore creative thinking, collaboration, and spatial experience;
2. **Field Observations** [37] in dance venues and rehearsal studios to capture how dancers behave, interact and create in situ;
3. **Participant Observation** [37] within an interactive dance production team to understand how creative, technical, and relational layers converge in process;
4. **Facilitated Co-creative** workshops in Koganecho, Yokohama Japan and KEIO university, Japan spaces, with mixed modes documentation including visuals, recordings, and embodied reflections.

The combination of these methods enabled a multifaceted understanding of how dancers create within their specific ecosystems and helped identify key opportunities for design intervention.

Stories from the Field to Insights

The visual landscape map [Fig 3.1] represent the diversity of contexts I encountered during the first phase of this research. Rather than outlining a conceptual ecosystem, this map is intended to offer a clear and intuitive view of the real-world complexity that shaped the early stages of the project, illustrating how individual, collaborative, and spatial factors all emerged through field engagement.

More than just a background overview, this visual serves as a navigational aid from three complementary perspectives. Individual Dancer Interviews, Production Team Participation and Conversation, Space Observations. These narratives formed the foundation for identifying dancers' creative needs and helped surface the distinctive value that my design intervention could bring in response.



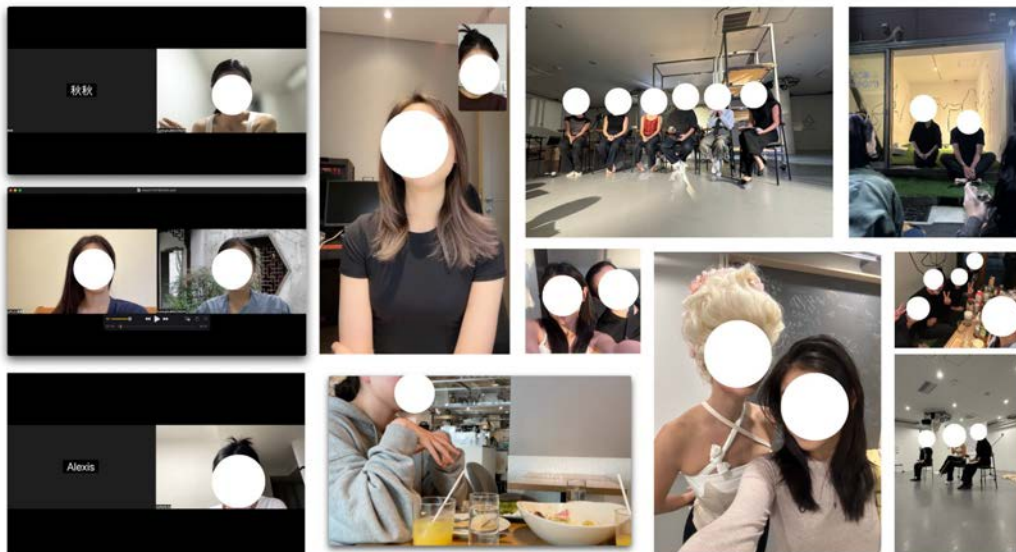
(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.1 Primary Data — Research Landscape

3.2.2 Individual Dancer Interviews

This part conducts semi-structured [36] online and in-person interviews with eight professional choreographers experienced in dance education, theater, and stage performance. These choreographers, aged 20 to 30, come from mainland China (Wuxi, Shanghai, Beijing, Chengdu, Zhejiang), Taiwan (Taipei), and Japan (Tokyo), with educational and professional backgrounds in Eastern for example China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and Western such as UK (London, Edinburgh), France, Italy, Germany, Poland, Spain, and US (New York, Los Angeles). Their dance genres include Jazz Funk, Musical Theatre, Contemporary Dance, hip-hop, Afro, Ballet etc.

The aim is to gather insights from choreographers with diverse international backgrounds to explore the unique perspectives gained from cross-cultural dance education. A key focus is the contrasting educational philosophies of East and West: Asian traditions emphasize technique, while Western approaches highlight natural flow and storytelling. This selection allows for genuine feedback on Eastern and Western choreography practices.



(Source: Author's archive)

Figure 3.2 Individual Interviews

The study aims to draw insightful conclusions through interviews, with questions focusing primarily on five key areas, including but not limited to the following:

- What is the personal impact of learning different dance genres in various countries?
- How do you define Choreography, and what aspect of it holds the greatest significance for you?
- At what point do you embark on creating your own choreography, and what typically inspires your original works?
- What does your ideal choreographic environment look like?
- What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on dance?

These questions were designed to elicit not only practical experiences but also internal reflections, allowing a closer look into the psychological, cultural, and creative worlds that dancers inhabit when developing original work.

While each dancer offered unique perspectives, several recurring tensions and strategies emerged. The following selected narratives illustrate the diversity and depth of choreographic thinking that shaped the foundation for my later design insights.

Interviewee 1 - Q.

Age: 27 / Background: Mainland China to UK / Training: Modern Dance to Breaking

Achievements: Successfully obtained the UK Global Talent Visa.

1. What is the personal impact of learning different dance genres in various countries?

Q's dance journey began at age five with Chinese classical and ballet training, rooted in community and home practice. During junior high, she was inspired by a ballet performance on YouTube that triggered her deeper interest in dance. Due to limited access to formal dance institutions in her hometown, she pursued

self-guided study and later trained in the U.S. and U.K., engaging with modern dance and later transitioning into breaking.

She contrasts Chinese and UK dance education as “technique-based vs. exploration-based.” In China, she felt the focus was on repetition and form; in the UK, she found space for intuition and improvisation. This contrast shaped her identity as an independent artist, seeking authenticity over imitation.

“Dance is about your own logic. If a move does not work for me, I will invent my own.”

2. How do you define choreography, and what aspect of it holds the greatest significance for you?

For Q, choreography is not about pattern or form. It is about meaning through movement. She defines choreography as *“something that’s completely based on the body,”* insisting that movement should arise from sensation, not external systems like music or counts.

“First compose the movement, then listen to the music.”

“Dance is about imagination. You re-create the rhyme.”

She views choreography as a form of therapy, a medium for internal discovery, saying dance helped her find clarity during emotional hardship.

3. At what point did you embark on creating your own choreography, and what typically inspires your original works?

Q began choreographing seriously after high school. For her, movement comes first, music is not the foundation but the echo. She draws inspiration from bodily rhythms, personal emotion, natural phenomena, and the challenge of confronting emptiness.

4. What does your ideal choreographic environment look like?

Her ideal choreographic space is one that allows for freedom, imperfection, and no-pressure exploration. She speaks about dancing in solitude, and values creative silence.

“When you are empty, dance can comfort you... The sponge must be empty to absorb.”

5. What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on dance?

For Q, the pandemic emphasized solitude and introspection. During lockdown, she created work alone in her apartment, which she says helped her discover her

truest style. The absence of classes and performances allowed her to build a personal system of expression, untethered from institutional validation.

She also noted that online dance became more image-based and socially constructed, which she sees as counter to the authenticity she values.

Additional Reflections

Q's insights reveal an artist who is deeply body-oriented and resistant to conventional structures of dance-making. She craves autonomy and expressive honesty, while still acknowledging the emotional need for community, shared space, and mutual inspiration.

"The important thing is: as a group of people!! The role of community is to gather together, sense of belonging, mutual inspiration, lonely part, a relationship."

Q's narrative reflects a dancer who uses choreography as a tool for personal transformation rather than performance display. Her story illustrates the importance of non-verbal, body-first creative processes and points toward new forms of collaboration that respect individual authorship while nurturing collective support.

Interviewee 2 - C.C.

Age: 31 / Background: Beijing to London / Training: Musical Theatre, Chinese Traditional Dance, Street Dance

Achievements: Creative lead for theatre performance at the Osaka Expo 2025

1. What is the personal impact of learning different dance genres in various countries?

C.C. received formal training from a young age in Chinese classical dance and later expanded into musical theatre and street dance. She studied at the Beijing Dance Academy and Goldsmiths College, University of London. currently, she teaches at a major dance institution in China.

Her experience working across countries has shaped her understanding of choreography as adaptive and context-sensitive. In China, she observed a stronger emphasis on technical systems, whereas in the UK, she noticed a greater openness to individual interpretation and aesthetic diversity.

"In China, there is a focus on replicating established systems. In the UK, chore-

ography is more open. Every person stands beside one another and you start to see what makes you unique.”

She believes that cross-cultural exposure is essential for dancers to recognize their own creative logic, rather than simply follow inherited models.

2. How do you define choreography, and what aspect of it holds the greatest significance for you?

For C.C., choreography is a form of idea building—a reflective process that moves beyond movement arrangement to incorporate thematic thinking, structure, and message. She emphasized that choreography must stay responsive to change, noting that each era requires new ways of making meaning through dance.

“You must keep updating your system. You can’t stick to one idea forever. The world moves on, so should choreography.”

To her, choreography is a living research process, where concepts, materials, emotions, and social questions converge. It’s not just a form. It’s an intellectual and creative scaffold.

3. At what point did you embark on creating your own choreography, and what typically inspires your original works?

C.C. began choreographing while working on musical theatre productions. She emphasizes that each new work forces her to rethink her creative model, especially when collaborating with different types of performers and production teams. She draws inspiration from personal history, aesthetic questions, space, time, and daily reflections.

She is particularly interested in how dancers compose not only movement, but the logic of a work, how different elements are selected, organized, and emotionally connected.

“I need to be responsible not just for the steps, but for the structure and rhythm of ideas.”

5. What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on dance?

Though not explicitly discussed in this interview, C.C. implies that the rapid change of global realities demands flexible choreographic thinking. Her call to constantly “update the system” reflects a broader responsiveness to change, likely influenced by pandemic-related disruptions to live performance and education.

Additional Reflections

C.C. is deeply engaged with the intellectual side of choreography, bridging her identity as a performer, educator, and artistic director. She emphasized the importance of critical thinking, cultural literacy, and aesthetic independence in dance-making, particularly for younger dancers in China.

“Too many dancers in China haven’t developed their own way of thinking. We need to cultivate choreographers who can build systems, who understand rhythm, theme, and message.”

Her experience suggests a dancer who is not only creating work, but cultivating systems for others to create as well. Her current leadership role underscores her interest in designing structures that support creativity on an institutional scale.

Interviewee 3 - L.G.

Age: 26 / Background: Shanghai, Taiwan to USA, UK / Style: Ballet, Musical Theatre, Jazz Funk, Hip-Hop, K-pop, Jazz Heels.

Achievements: Full-time K-pop and choreography teacher in the UK; signed to a major UK dancer agency under Global Talent Visa.

1. What is the personal impact of learning different dance genres in various countries?

L.G. studied dance across China mainland, Taiwan, the US, and the UK. She did her undergraduate degree at Goldsmiths collage, University of London. Developing exposure to both fundamental technical training and diverse stage styles such as musical theatre and freestyle. She noted that different countries offer distinct values around self-expression in Asia, she focused more on form and performance; in the West, she discovered how movement could reflect identity and deeper intention.

“When I studied abroad, I finally realized what dancing meant to me. Not just how it looks, but how it feels, how I own it.”

This cross-cultural training helped her develop a strong sense of ownership over her dancing. She became more aware of her own physical characteristics and how to integrate them into performance.

2. How do you define choreography, and what aspect of it holds the greatest significance for you?

For L.G., choreography is a medium of transformation. She chose choreography

as her career path over pure performance because she wanted to express something more personal and meaningful. It's not just about creating visually exciting pieces—it's about conveying intention, emotion, and self-awareness.

"It's a form of growth. You have to understand yourself first—choreography pushes you to do that."

3. At what point did you embark on creating your own choreography, and what typically inspires your original works?

She began choreographing seriously after transitioning into full-time teaching in the UK. Teaching K-pop routines pushed her to explore movement logic more deeply and creatively re-interpret styles. Freestyle practice (especially house and hip-hop) also became a critical training method for developing her choreographic voice.

"Freestyle helps me find new movement logic, especially through rhythm, weight, breath."

4. What does your ideal choreographic environment look like?

Her inspirations come from mood, memory, everyday emotion, and personal bodily feeling. She focuses more on the body's response than on external themes.

5. What impact has the COVID-19 pandemic had on dance?

While not described in detail, L.G. hinted that her global training trajectory and eventual move to the UK were indirectly shaped by the pandemic period. The time pushed her to reflect on what kind of dancer and creator she wanted to become—and catalyzed her pursuit of international certification and career migration.

Additional Reflections

L.G. sees choreography not only as performance, but also as a tool for connecting with others. She values spaces where dancers are encouraged to be vulnerable and expressive, and hopes to contribute to building those platforms in the UK. She emphasized that training should be both technical and emotional, and that dancers need to be supported in finding their own voices.

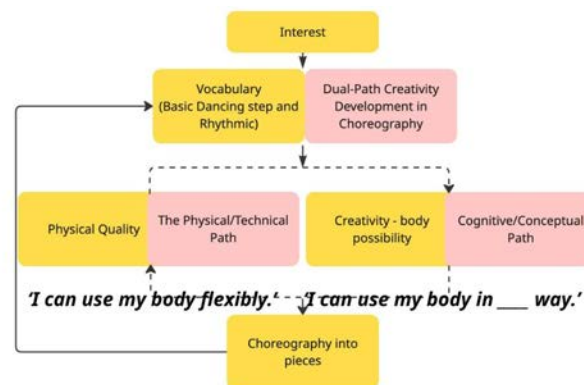
"A great dancer knows how to make meaning with their body—not just copy other people's shapes."

She also believes dancers should be trained to understand how to analyze their own body and develop a personal movement system.

Insights for choreography development

From the interviews conducted, several key themes emerged regarding dancers' creative trajectories and choreographic thinking.

First, many dancers described their growth as non-linear yet cyclical [Fig 3.3]. Their development involves not only physical training and technical refinement, but also continuous expansion of creative awareness and artistic perception. Based on the model constructed from their input, a typical creative cycle begins with interest and rhythm vocabulary, expands into physical possibilities and expressive movement, and eventually culminates in a choreographic work. Importantly, this process is not a one-time event but a repetitive, evolving loop requiring ongoing practice and self-renewal. Rather than following a straightforward path from



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.3 Dancing Development Logic Cycle

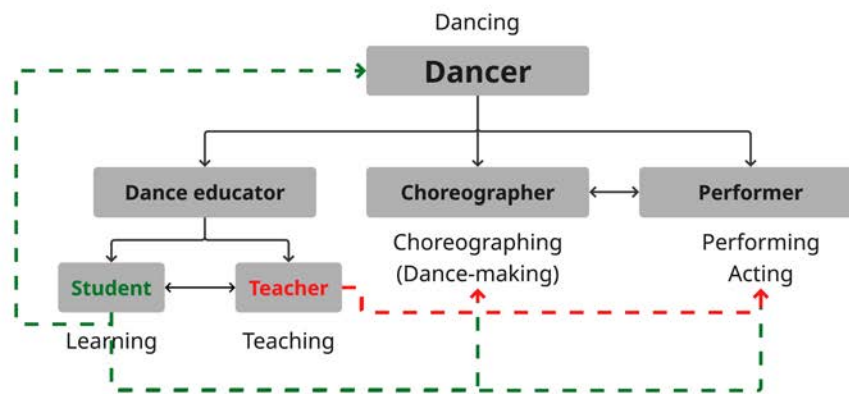
training to performance, dancers engage in a continual process of learning, de-constructing, unlearning, and rebuilding. This evolving journey is not merely the accumulation of skill, but an intricate negotiation between cultural shifts, personal experience, and embodied artistic practice, through which dancers construct their own choreographic languages.

Second, as illustrated in Figure 3.4, the ecosystem of dance practice comprises multiple roles, dancer, choreographer, performer, educator, student, and teacher, that are often interconnected and fluid. Through my interviews with dance professionals and based on my own experience, it became clear that these roles are not fixed, but constantly shifting depending on one's phase, context, and engagement

within the field.

This insight emerged particularly during interviews when participants reflected on the evolving nature of their identities. A dancer may simultaneously embody the roles of performer, educator, and choreographer, but each role carries distinct expectations. For example, a choreographer is not merely a dancer who performs; rather, they must continuously generate, reflect on, and communicate original ideas. In contrast, a performer focuses on embodying and expressing choreographic material with interpretive clarity and technical precision. Similarly, a dance educator must understand pedagogical structures and cultivate learning environments, while a student or teacher can transition between these positions depending on the situation.

Importantly, this diagram highlights that while all choreographers are dancers, not all dancers are necessarily choreographers. The act of choreography requires a creative commitment and conceptual ownership that distinguishes it from performance or teaching alone. Moreover, movement between roles, such as from student to teacher, or from educator to learner, is not only possible but essential to sustaining growth in dance practice. This dynamic view challenges the assumption of linear development and instead emphasizes continuous learning, reflection, and role negotiation within a broader dance ecology.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.4 Understanding about Dance and the Role in Dance

Third, in today's freelance and multi-disciplinary environment, dancers em-

phasized that maintaining expressive capacity and creative vitality has become a professional necessity. Whether teaching across cultures, fusing genres, or working with students and collaborators, dancers must consistently sustain their creative mindset and bodily awareness. This ability goes beyond “being able to dance” it is about how to create, how to communicate, and how to revise and reinvent one’s own movement systems.

Fourth, although the COVID-19 pandemic was not always explicitly discussed, it has implicitly reshaped dancers’ attitudes toward creation. The experience of isolation and online performance has led dancers to reimagine the relationship between movement and space, collaborative modes, and the sources of inspiration. This has fostered a new rhythm in choreography: solo exploration, collective creation, regeneration.

Finally, while many dancers emphasized personal expression and autonomy in their creative processes, almost all pointed to the essential role of community. This community is not necessarily formal or institutional, it may instead refer to a space of mutual recognition, idea sharing, and collective resilience. In this sense, community aligns closely with the SDT concept of relatedness: dancers are not isolated agents, but part of a larger, relational web where collaboration and connection empower their creative identities.

These insights also raise design-oriented reflections: How might we build systems or environments that help dancers sustain their intrinsic motivation, maintain a sense of autonomy in creative exploration, and strengthen their feeling of competence over time? Design, in this context, is not only about tools, but about shaping conditions and rhythms that support thought-in-progress, expressive labor, and imaginative agency.

3.2.3 Space Observations

While the previous section focused on individual dancers’ internal motivations, creative patterns, and personal trajectories, understanding choreography as a cultural and social practice requires more than just personal stories. Dancers do not create in isolation, they operate within physical, cultural, and institutional environments that shape what is possible, encouraged, or even allowed.

This part of the research turns attention toward those environments. By ob-

serving dance-related spaces and infrastructures in Japan, I sought to understand the ecosystem in which dancers live, train, collaborate, and perform. What kinds of spaces are available to them? How do these places support or constrain creative work? What organizational models are currently shaping the local dance community?

My choice to focus on Japan was both personal and strategic. After spending two years immersed in the UK's immersive and interdisciplinary performance scene, I returned to Asia with a desire to contrast and contextualize that experience. Japan, with its rich cultural heritage, strong performing arts history, and vibrant contemporary scene, presented a compelling field for inquiry. As a Chinese dancer-researcher navigating between these cultural zones, I was curious to see how local systems support dancers' development, and whether distinct spatial or organizational models exist that foster creativity and sustainable practice in different ways.

By engaging with these spaces, not only physically, but also through interviews with their organizers and users, I hoped to uncover how "place" influences creative practice in Japan, and how this context compares to other models I had experienced abroad.

This section research focuses on three representative sites within Japan's dance landscape: Dance Base Yokohama as an art incubator with the YPAM (Yokohama International Performing Arts Meeting) Festival as a platform-based exchange structure and Koganecho / Kocogarden as a community-driven creative space.

Dance Base Yokohama

Dance Base Yokohama (DaBY) ¹ is an inclusive and thoughtfully designed dance facility located in the historic red-brick district of Yokohama, approximately 8–10 minutes' walk from Sakuragicho Station. Like many cultural spaces in Japan, DaBY occupies the third floor of a commercial building, yet its spatial experience feels unusually open, adaptable, and inviting.

The architectural layout follows a rectangular-in-rectangle structure, designed

1 Dance Base Yokohama, Concept. <https://dancebase.yokohama/en/concept>. Accessed May 26.



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.5 Dace Base Yokohama

for both functionality and creative flexibility. Inside, the space features modular wooden elements: tables, benches, shelves that can be freely rearranged by dancers. Mirrors, racks, and even writable walls further support spontaneous use. The window structures are especially noteworthy: they function as seating areas but also as surfaces for physical interaction during dance practice.

When not hosting performances, the space operates as both a rehearsal area and office. All furnishings are moveable, allowing dancers to curate their own environment. At times, the venue also transforms into a public-facing performance site, where visitors are free to walk in, observe rehearsals, or engage with events. Its front area often displays flyers for performing arts events in Yokohama, creating a casual yet effective information and networking hub.

What makes DaBY particularly unique is its spatial openness and social permeability. It regularly attracts a diverse community beyond just dancers, choreographers, digital artists, international dance critics, scenographers, installation artists, and even students from film and design degree programs. This blend of accessibility, spatial generosity, and creative freedom positions DaBY not only as a rehearsal venue but as an interdisciplinary meeting ground for contemporary performing arts.

Through interviews with DaBY's core management team with N.T. and S.I., I learned that the space operates with stable funding support and maintains a

strong focus on artist residencies and cultural exchange. It hosts a formal artist-in-residence program through which selected Japanese dancers are invited to develop their creative practice over time. Additionally, DaBY regularly opens application calls to dancers from around the world, offering short-term visa and DaBY artist residencies support to facilitate artistic exchange within Japan.

What sets DaBY apart is not only its commitment to presenting international performers but its emphasis on co-development rather than one-off presentations. Resident Japanese dancers are actively encouraged to collaborate with visiting artists, not only by creating new works together but also by engaging in daily shared experiences. These often include communal meals, cultural excursions, or simply spending time together to generate ideas outside the studio. One international performer I interviewed shared that these immersive interactions led her to fall in love with Japan, and even inspired her to incorporate Japanese gestures and everyday motions into her choreography, pushing her creative language further.

I also spoke with three Japanese resident artists at DaBY, who reflected on how the program supports their shift from dancers to choreographers. Rather than a hierarchical relationship with a lead choreographer, they described a collaborative model of shared authorship. The residency also offers curated opportunities to learn about global choreographic practices and vocabularies, something they deeply appreciated. Many of them live in Tokyo and commute over an hour to reach DaBY, but expressed a strong sense of belonging and motivation that keeps them coming back.

YPAM(Yokohama International Performing Arts Meeting)

The Yokohama International Performing Arts Meeting (YPAM) ² [Fig 3.6] is a cultural platform that plays a pivotal role in Japan's contemporary performing arts scene. Originally inspired by similar models from the Netherlands, for example Amsterdam Fringe Festival ³, YPAM was established to create an infrastructure for presenting and supporting innovative performing arts projects. Every year, it

2 What is YPAM?. <https://ypam.jp/2025/about/index.html>. Accessed May 29.

3 Amsterdam Fringe Festival Official Website. <https://amsterdamfringefestival.nl/>. Accessed June 15.

issues an open call for experimental and cross-disciplinary works from around the world, and organizes a city-wide program of performances across venues in Yokohama, including Koganecho, Dance Base Yokohama (DaBY), and other nearby art spaces.



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.6 Yokohama International Performing Arts Meeting (YPAM) Map



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.7 YPAM Centre at Koganecho

More than just a festival, YPAM serves as a network-building mechanism that connects artists, curators, producers, and audiences. Its reception hub is located in the heart of Koganecho, where it has created a calm, welcoming space designed

for open dialogue. With quiet seating areas, coffee chats, and food-sharing zones, this home base fosters informal, spontaneous exchanges among visitors, residents, and professionals.

One of YPAM's organizers described their vision as follows:

"We want this to be a second home for people who care about performing arts, a place where you can always stop by, relax, and share your thoughts with others."

This spirit of openness and hospitality reflects YPAM's core mission: to cultivate a vibrant, international, and inclusive performing arts community rooted in Yokohama's evolving urban and cultural fabric.

Yokohama Koganecho Area

As part of this broader ecosystem, Koganecho ⁴ plays a vital role, not only as a venue for YPAM performances, but also as a long-standing cultural district with a transformative history. Once known as a neighborhood inhabited largely by transient populations and informal economies, Koganecho underwent a major revitalization effort led by the local government. In collaboration with arts organizations, the area was reimagined as a creative hub, aiming to restore vibrancy through culture.

Today, Koganecho welcomes artists from around the world for short-term residencies, offering them the opportunity to engage directly with the neighborhood. Artists are encouraged to create and exhibit their work in the public spaces along the streets, murals, installations, performances, fostering spontaneous dialogue with local communities and forming intimate creative exchanges.

One such artist-run space that embodies this spirit is Kocogarden, led by Canada artist S. The following section explores how this space functions as a grassroots node of art-making and artistic dialogue within the evolving urban fabric of Koganecho.

Kocogarden is founding philosophy centers around the idea of *"shared time, shared space, and shared life"* [Fig 3.10], envisioning art not as a spectacle but as a lived, communal experience. It aims to create a nurturing environment where

4 Art and Communities Life and Practice in Koganecho, Yokohama, Published March, 2023. <https://koganecho.net/9616/4>. Accessed May 26.



(Source: Author's Archive)

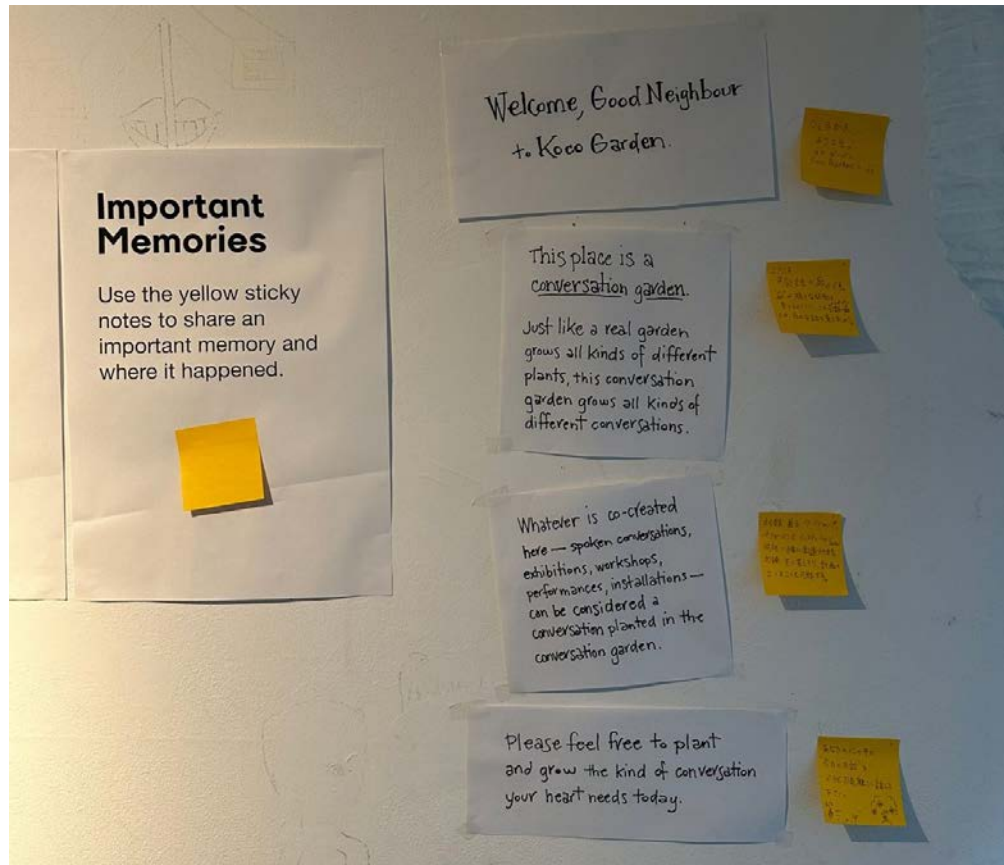
Figure 3.8 Koganecho Area Map



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.9 Koganecho Area

artists and visitors can think, eat, rest, and create together, blurring the line between art-making and everyday life. [Fig 3.11]



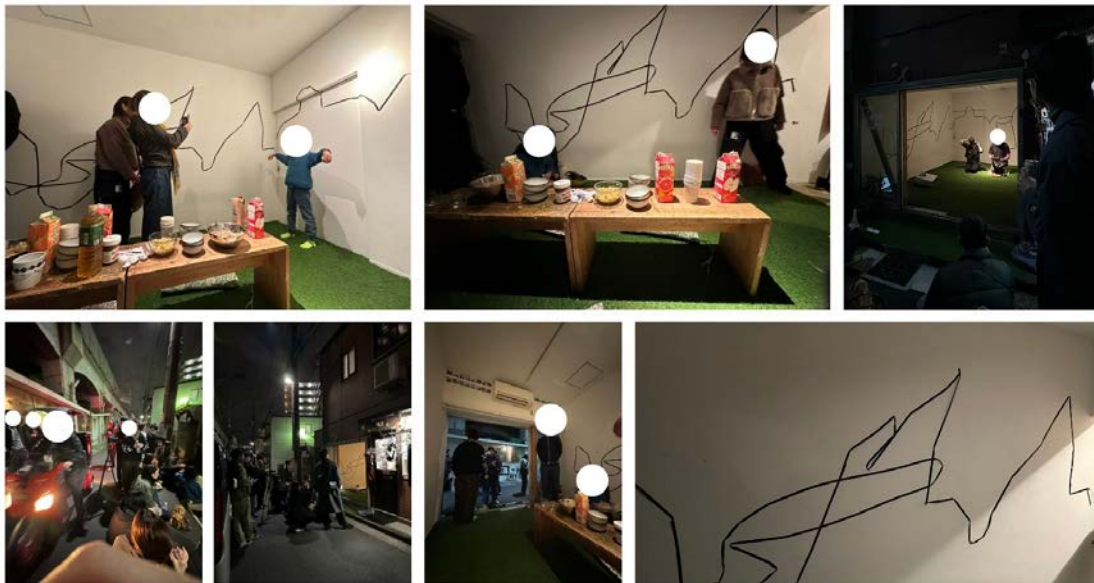
(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.10 Kocogarden Concept

The space serves as a fluid platform for artistic experimentation, fostering a sense of intimacy and openness. Unlike formal galleries or theaters, Kocogarden invites impromptu participation and interaction. For instance, it has hosted exhibitions by visiting artists from Indonesia, including a mixed-media installation that explored themes of displacement and identity. Following the exhibition, Kocogarden organized a shared food gathering, allowing artists and attendees to converse casually over homemade dishes, transforming artistic dialogue into lived hospitality.

In another event, a group of performing artists staged a site-specific performance

within the narrow architecture of the house, followed by a reflective discussion with the audience about the spatial and emotional elements of their work. The space has also hosted live drawing sessions, where both professionals and community members sketched and shared ideas side by side, as well as topic-centered dialogue nights, where participants explored themes ranging from urban memory to environmental storytelling. In all these examples, Kocogarden functioned less as



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.11 Kocogarden Photos

a venue and more as a home, like artistic commons, an intimate node of cultural exchange that embraces vulnerability, slowness, and authentic encounter.

Insights

Across the three observed spaces, Dance Base Yokohama (DaBY), the YPAM Festival, and Kocogarden in Koganecho, where is a shared but diverse set of values emerged around how space can support dancers' creative processes. Although each site offers different structures and degrees of formality, they collectively emphasize openness, cultural exchange, and emotional safety as critical enablers of sustained artistic work.

At Dance Base Yokohama, the spatial design and operational model reflected a strong commitment to supporting artists holistically. Its modular furniture, movable mirrors, writable walls, and community-centered architectural elements all contributed to a space that dancers could actively shape and reconfigure. Through its artist residency program, DaBY not only provides physical space but also encourages dancers to take creative ownership and co-develop projects with international collaborators. This model supports not only competence, through exposure to global standards and feedback, but also autonomy, by positioning dancers as authors rather than executors of ideas.

The YPAM Festival, which incorporates DaBY as one of its key venues, further amplifies this approach by acting as a platform-based cultural infrastructure. Drawing inspiration from European performing arts festivals, YPAM curates a structured yet porous ecosystem where artists from around the world engage with local institutions and spaces. Its reception home in Koganecho functions as a social anchor, promoting spontaneous dialogue, slow conversation, and multi-role participation. This kind of festival framework facilitates relatedness, allowing artists to feel part of a larger cultural movement while also forming intimate connections in shared physical and conceptual spaces.

Finally, Kocogarden exemplifies the most grassroots and informal expression of these values. As an artist-run space, it encourages living with art rather than simply producing or displaying it. Through shared meals, live drawing sessions, improvised performances, and topic-based conversations, it becomes a site where creativity is embedded in everyday life. Artists spoke of feeling “at home” and being more willing to experiment, fail, and reflect, conditions crucial to long-term creative motivation. Here, community functions not just as an audience or network, but as a form of emotional infrastructure, enabling slow, authentic, and sustaining creation.

Taken together, these insights suggest that the creative ecosystem in Japan is not defined by a single type of institution, but by a constellation of spaces that attend to different dimensions of artistic life, from skill-building and international dialogue to emotional comfort and local connection. For future design interventions aimed at supporting dancers, this underscores the importance of not only providing tools or structured training, but also designing environments that

cultivate trust, autonomy, and embedded social support.

3.2.4 Production Team Conversations

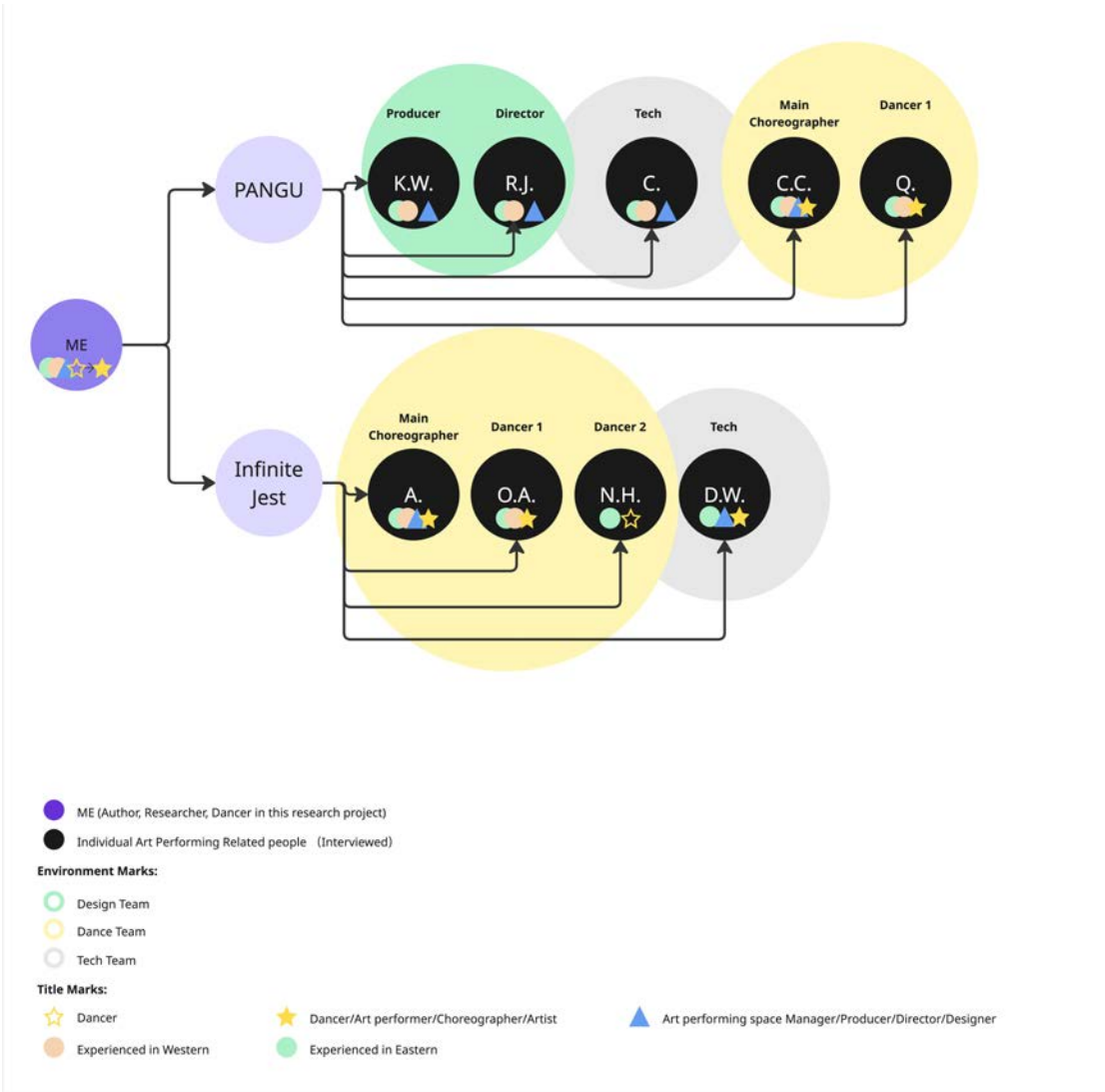
Following my exploration of spatial and cultural infrastructures in Japan's dance communities, I came to recognize that dancers' creative practices are rarely solitary or studio-bound. Instead, they are deeply embedded within project-based production ecosystems dynamic environments in which creative ideas must be negotiated, realized, and delivered within collaborative and time-sensitive frameworks.

To better understand dancers' realities within these ecosystems, I shifted focus toward two immersive performance projects that I was directly involved in: Pangu and Infinite Jest. [Fig 3.12] These productions offered a close-up view of how choreography unfolds not as an isolated act, but as a collaborative process shaped by multiple agents: choreographers, performers, technical teams, and directors.

In these contexts, the dancer's role becomes more than physical execution. It involves creative authorship, negotiation, and communication. Through rehearsals, technical preparations, and reflective interviews with key collaborators, I examined how dancers contribute to shared ideation, how creative intentions are communicated (or miscommunicated), and where gaps or tensions emerge in the co-creation process.

This section explores the collaborative mechanisms and creative challenges dancers face in real-world production settings. It also highlights opportunities where new tools, methods, or modes of dialogue could better support dancers as active co-creators within interdisciplinary teams.

Pangu is an immersive dance piece that blends movement with AR-based projection art to interpret the ancient Chinese myth of Pangu. The work showcases Eastern storytelling and aesthetics in a contemporary form, presented to Western audiences. Its initial version (Pangu 1.0) was performed at the Edinburgh Festival Fringe, where it received a Sell-Out Show Award, and was later developed into Pangu 2.0 and staged in a London theatre. Through this project, I gained a deep understanding of how dancers particularly choreographers who operate within complex production ecosystems: the challenges they face, their creative identities, and how their ideas are communicated within a multidisciplinary team. Drawing



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.12 Project Based Interview Overview

from my full participation in the process, from movement rehearsals to tech runs to live performances, and interviews with the producer, the director/technical lead of the 1.0 version, and the head of technical development for the 2.0 version, I was able to trace how choreographic ideas were generated, negotiated, and realized.

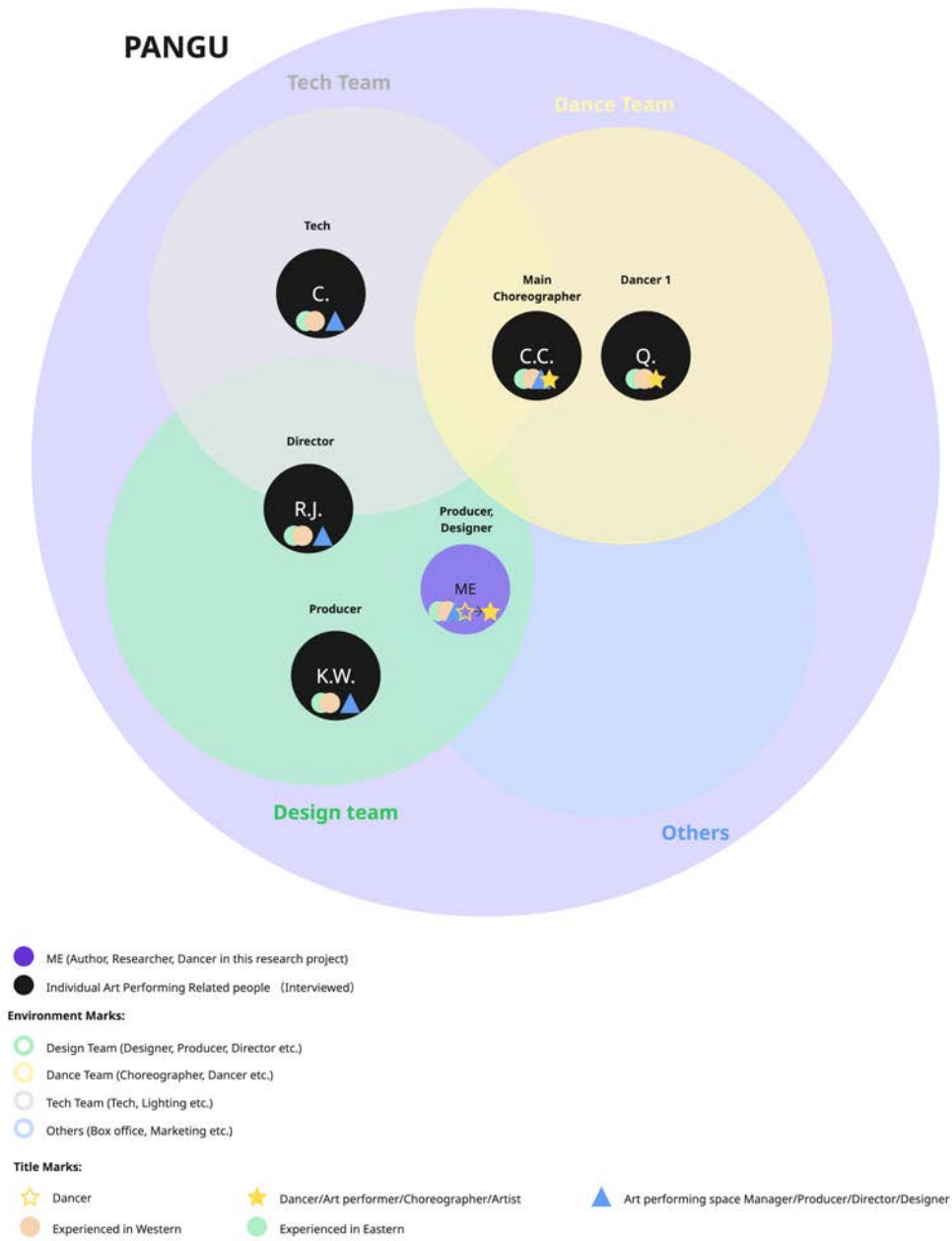
Infinite Jest was examined primarily through rehearsal observation and interviews. I focused on how the lead choreographer, dancers, and technical designers collaborated throughout the process. My observation aimed to capture how creative ideas emerged through their real-time exchanges and co-creation practices. I also conducted interviews with both the lead choreographer and the lead technical designer to understand their perspectives on collaboration and creativity in interdisciplinary dance-making.

The following subsections will provide a closer look into the processes, interactions, and challenges observed in these two projects, forming the basis for later insights.

PANGU — Choreographing Myth Across Mediums and Teams

The first production case study is Pangu, a cross-cultural multimedia physical theatre performance that reinterprets the Chinese creation myth of the same name through contemporary dance and augmented projection technologies. This is a group consisting of approximately 20 team members, divided into 4 subgroups (Tech Team, Dance Team, Design Team, Others). As a producer from the very beginning of the project [Fig 3.13], I was responsible for coordinating inter-departmental communication, handling production logistics, venue coordination, travel planning, and budget management. My participation extended beyond production duties. I actively observed dance and technical rehearsals, driven by personal interest and prior dance experience, to better understand how choreography emerges within interdisciplinary collaboration.

During rehearsals, I noticed that the lead choreographer typically began with a strong visual and emotional response to the music, translating it into movements that carried the intended texture and narrative. In this case, communication within the dance team was fluid and effective: all four dancers shared a Chinese cultural background, and thus a collective familiarity with the myth of Pangu. This shared conceptual framework allowed them to improvise and build upon



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.13 Pangu and Me

each other's ideas intuitively, expressing the story's essence physically without needing extensive verbal discussion.

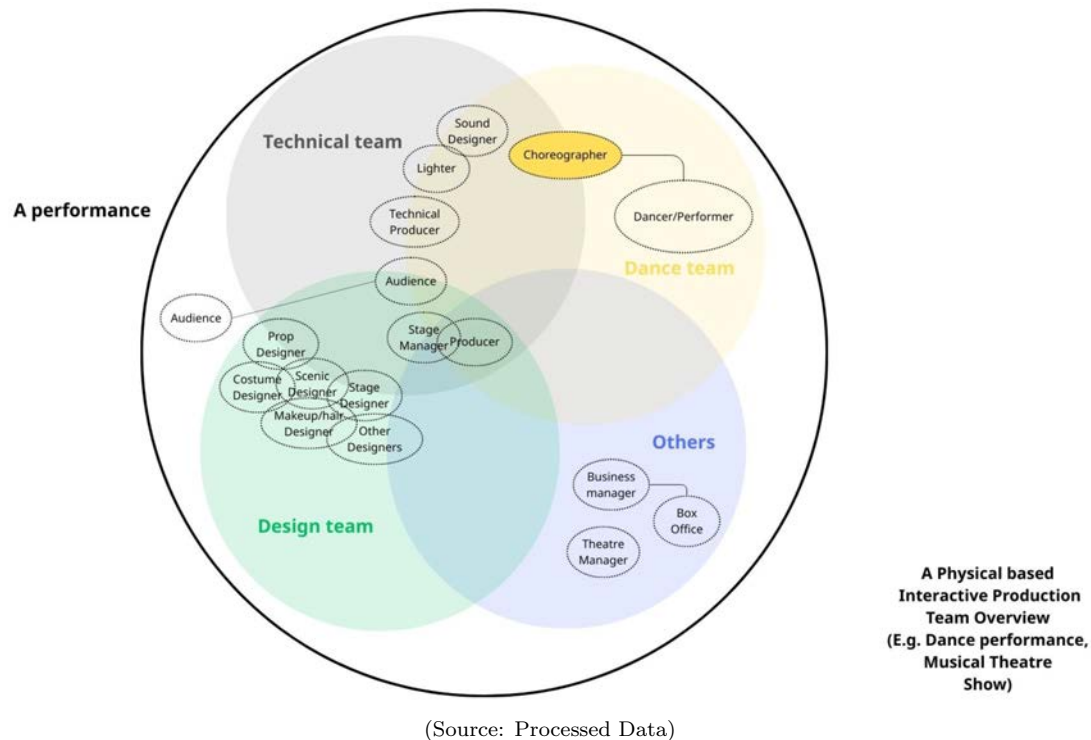


Figure 3.14 An Interactive Physical Performance Team Overview

However, this cohesion did not always extend to communication between the dance team and other departments. Interviews with the main producer and director confirmed this. The producer explained that while she had experience overseeing creative productions, the abstract nature of dance made it difficult to understand the choreographers' specific needs or intentions. As producers often also function as stage managers or project facilitators, they must remain continuously informed of each department's development. But when working with a dance-tech hybrid production, the absence of a common expressive language can hinder the seamless transmission of ideas. Figures 3.14 and 3.15 illustrate the typical conditions dancers encounter within project-based productions, providing visual context to help the reader better understand the landscape of such working environments.

The director also pointed out similar issues, especially in aligning choreography

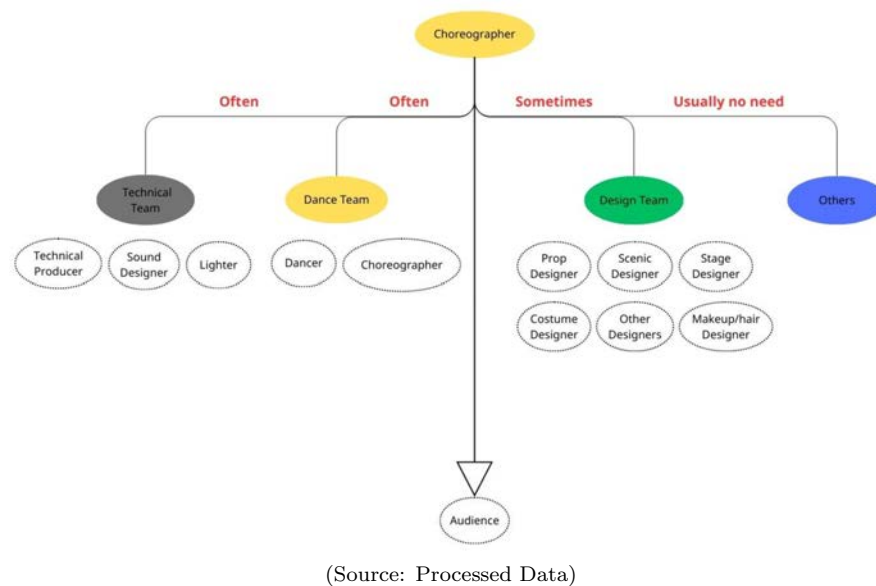


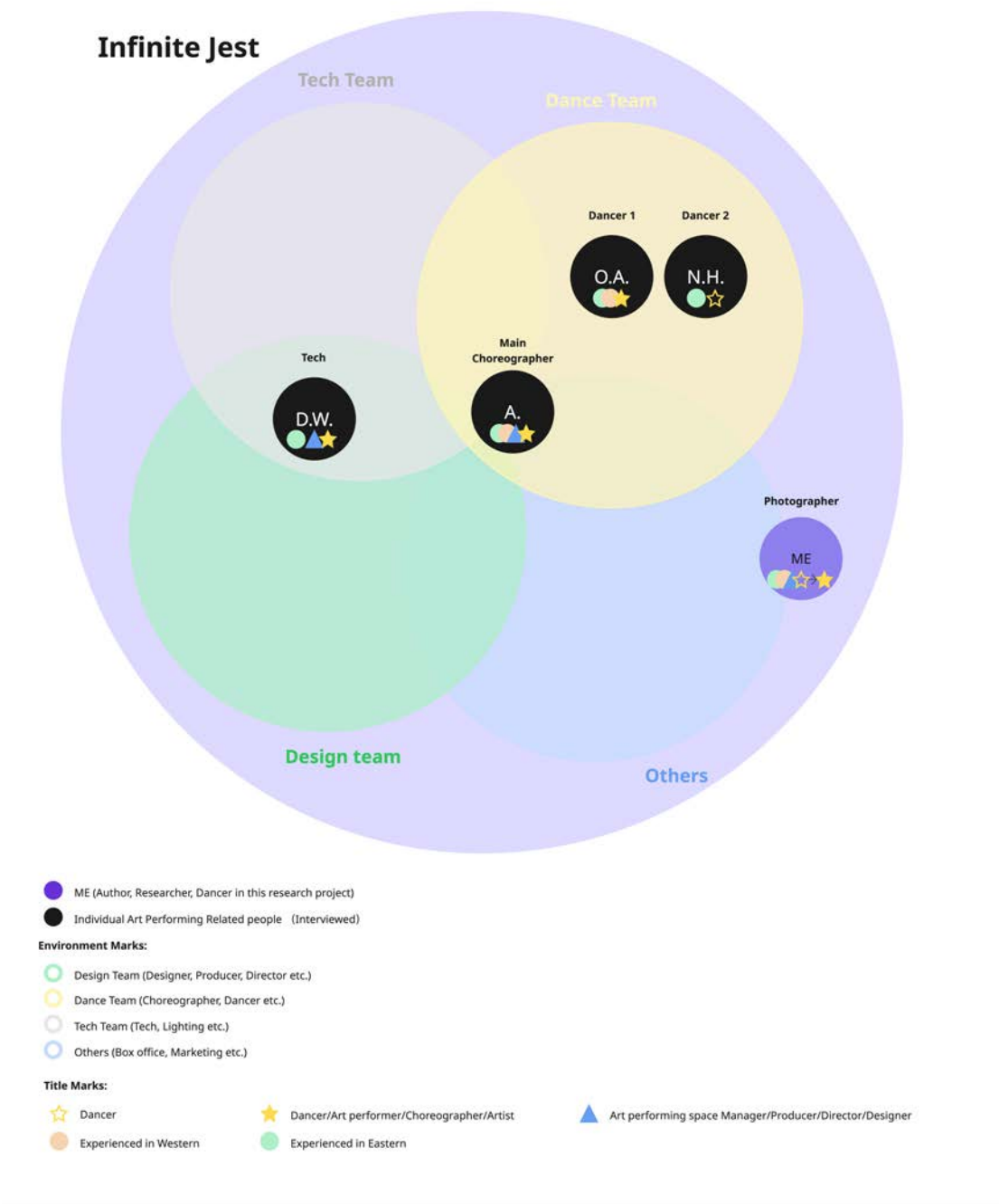
Figure 3.15 The Communication State of Dancers Within A Team

with interactive visuals. Since dancers and technical designers use entirely different vocabularies, critical moments often “missed the click” preventing the full theatrical effect. The technical designer further noted that in smaller teams, such disconnections tend to be fewer due to closer working relationships, but emphasized the importance of learning each other’s thinking styles. For example, tech collaborators who understand the improvisational rhythm and visual intuition of choreographers can better support them in real-time ideation and execution.

Infinite Jest — Collaborative Choreography and Improvisation in a Generative Dance System

The second case study, Infinite Jest, is an experimental dance production that integrates live projection mapping with AI-generated visuals, responding in real-time to dancers’ movements through a custom-designed vision system. In this project, I took on the role of an observer, closely documenting the rehearsal process and the dynamics of co-creation between the lead choreographer named as A. and her collaborators. [Fig 3.16]

The performance featured six dancers and was characterized by a high degree of uncertainty and improvisation, both in terms of the choreographic structure



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.16 Infinite Jest and Me

and the interactive media response. Unlike Pangu, where the narrative was pre-established, Infinite Jest demanded that the team build movement ideas from scratch, often responding to emergent technical conditions and fragmentary inspirations.

A particularly insightful moment occurred when the team faced a creative impasse: they needed to choreograph a scene depicting drunkenness, yet struggled to define the mood and physicality of that section. To spark ideas, the lead choreographer posed an open prompt to her collaborators:

“What happens when you are drunk in Japan? What do you do physically? Do you speak? Lie down? Laugh?”

She also offered her own experience *“I often laugh and fall asleep right after”* and referenced the common sight of intoxicated people sleeping on city streets. These provocations prompted the dancers to recall their personal memories and cultural references. One dancer began improvising based on such imagery, producing a rough phrase of movement that later became a foundation for the final piece.

This process was repeated throughout the project. Whenever creative blockages arose, the lead choreographer used conversational prompts and contextual memories to ignite improvisation. This method not only generated authentic, emotionally resonant material but also allowed each dancer’s personality and stylistic identity to shine through. The final performance was described by audience members as “uniquely personal,” “emotionally vivid,” and “deeply relatable” a testament to the success of this collaborative strategy.

From my position as a researcher, Infinite Jest revealed how choreographic collaboration can be enhanced by personal storytelling, cultural reference points, and autonomy-supportive leadership. The lead choreographer acted not as a top-down director but as a facilitator, drawing out ideas from dancers through trust, dialogue, and improvisational prompts. The result was a work that not only embraced the unpredictability of its technical medium but also honored the distinct voices of its performers.

Most importantly, beyond the rehearsal room, my conversations with the lead choreographer A. and the technical designer D.W. offered additional insights into sustaining creative momentum across an extended production timeline. As the team planned to further develop Infinite Jest in future iterations, I asked how they

typically navigate creative stagnation or break out of conceptual comfort zones during long-term collaborations.

Both collaborators pointed me toward the often-overlooked role of a *dramaturg* in performance-making. [1] Drawing from *Dramaturgy in the Making: A User's Guide for Theatre Practitioners* by Katalin Trencsényi. She explained that while creators such as choreographers and directors are fully capable of completing a work on their own, engaging in dialogue with a dramaturg often opens up new interpretive and compositional possibilities. [1] Traditionally understood as a figure who shapes the performance logic and coherence of a piece, the dramaturg brings an “external eye” to the process, which offers holistic feedback that connects the work to broader cultural, philosophical, or aesthetic contexts. [1]

Choreographer A. emphasized that dramaturgs do not usually intervene in the actual staging but help creators reflect on questions such as: *Is the narrative globally comprehensible? Is the concept fully embodied across all mediums? Where might the audience experience confusion or emotional detachment?* In this way, the dramaturg becomes a critical bridge between internal experimentation and public presentation, supporting creators in aligning their artistic goals with wider audience engagement.

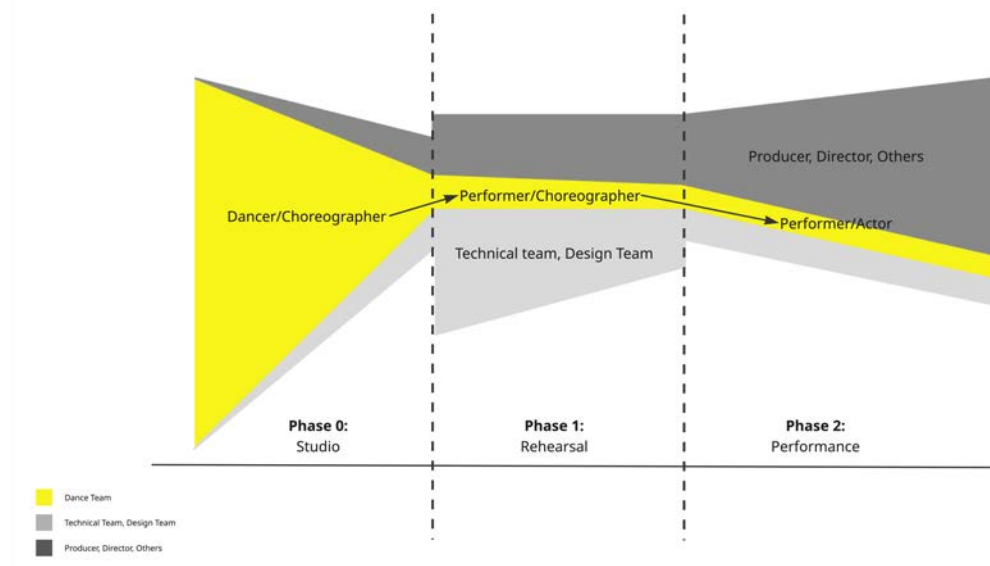
This perspective resonated strongly with the improvisational and co-creative spirit of Infinite Jest, where feedback loops, open-ended dialogue, and cross-disciplinary thinking were essential. As A. described, having someone who can periodically step back and reflect on the work from a macro level, especially someone well versed in other disciplines, can significantly enhance not only the coherence but also the emotional and intellectual depth of a collaborative piece.

Insights

These two immersive case studies led to the emergence of Five key insights.

First, drawing on Bill Buxton's discussion of the irreplaceable yet integrated role of designers in product development cycles. [38] I reflected on the position of dancers, especially choreographers, within interdisciplinary creative teams. Much like designers who bridge engineering and marketing. Choreographers must navigate between artistic vision, embodied movement, and cross-departmental coordination. This underscores the need for a communicative system or framework that

enables dancers to articulate abstract movement ideas to collaborators from different disciplinary backgrounds, such as producers, directors, or technical designers, who may not share the same artistic vocabulary. [Fig 3.17]

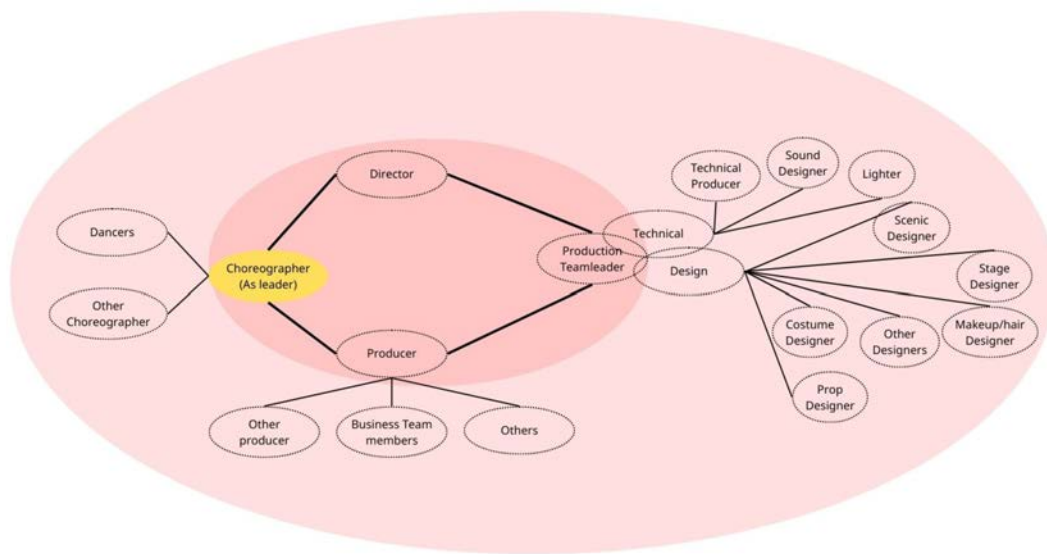


(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.17 Creative Choreography — Dance Phase

Second, these projects revealed that being a choreographer in multimedia or interactive productions requires not only technical expertise and creative fluency, but also leadership in the early design phase. Establishing a clear conceptual and emotional direction at the outset helps ensure coherence across teams and reduces misalignment later in the process. When this thematic foundation is shared, dancers can better co-create within a common framework, and the final performance benefits from a stronger, more unified artistic identity. [Fig 3.18]

Third, the creative process observed in Infinite Jest highlights the value of personal narrative, cultural specificity, and improvisational trust in collaborative choreography. Rather than relying solely on pre-structured movement vocabularies, the lead choreographer encouraged dancers to draw from their lived experiences, using everyday stories as generative prompts. This approach not only fostered a sense of autonomy and creative ownership, but also aligned with par-



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.18 Ideal Condition for An Interactive Physical Performance

ticipatory design principles, where each contributor becomes a co-author of the final work. The resulting choreography carried emotional depth and individuality, suggesting that effective co-creation in dance hinges not on top-down direction, but on dialogue-driven, context-sensitive exploration. This points toward future frameworks that could better support improvisation-led, dancer-driven creation in interdisciplinary projects.

Fourth, my conversations with the choreographer and technical director of Infinite Jest introduced the critical role of dramaturgical collaboration in expanding creative possibilities. While dancers and choreographers may independently complete their work, the involvement of a dramaturg, a professional offering interpretive, conceptual, or cultural feedback, can act as a reflective mirror for the team. Positioned outside the immediate creative loop, the dramaturg offers a bird's-eye view that helps teams reassess conceptual coherence, audience relevance, and artistic direction. This perspective is especially useful in resolving creative blockages and aligning interdisciplinary visions. Integrating dramaturgy into dance-making thus enhances both the process and the final work by offering space for critical dialogue, reflection, and narrative refinement.

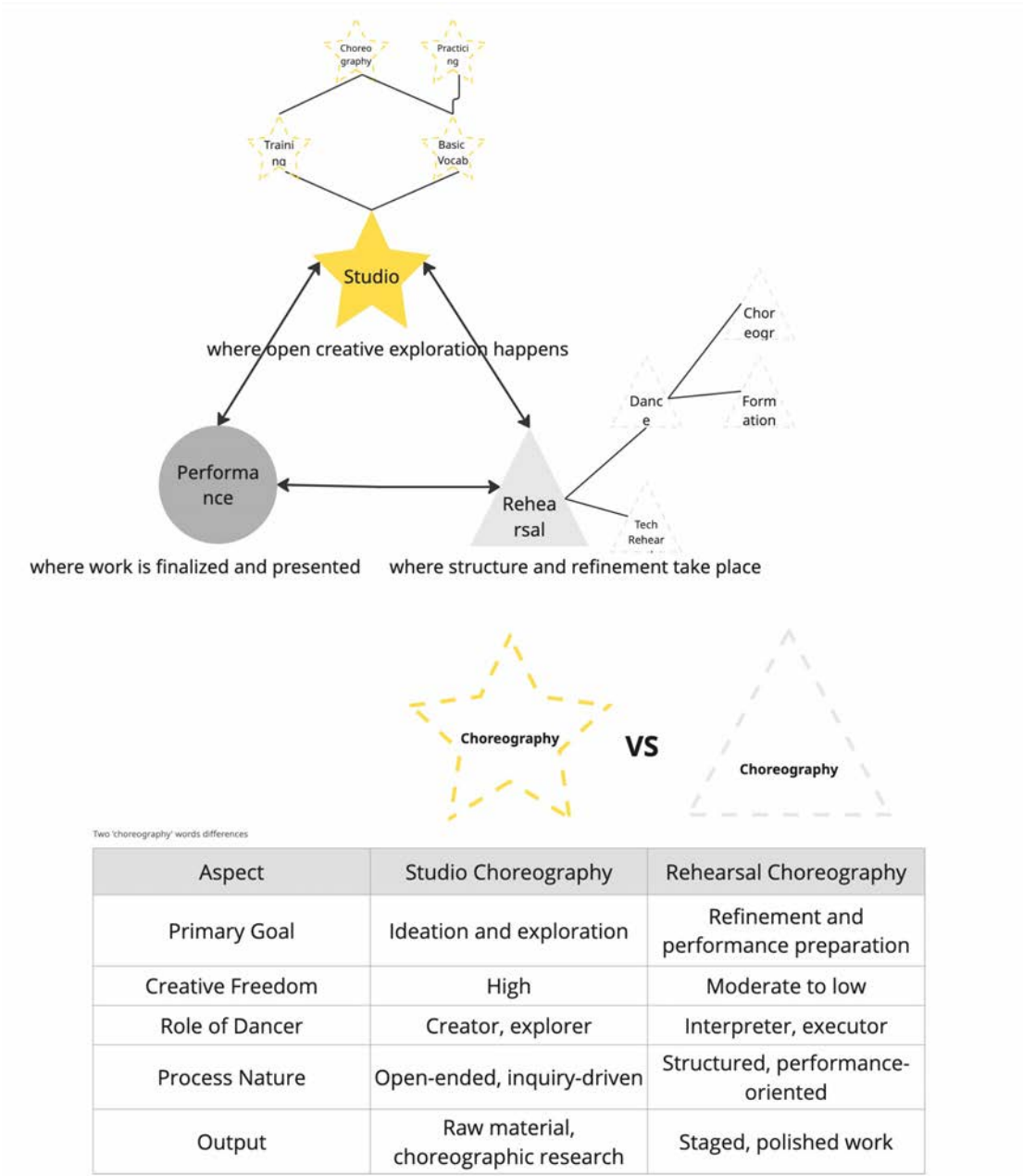
Fifth, observing different phases of the choreographic process. Through this process, I identified distinct creative dynamics that dancers experience across the studio, rehearsal, and performance settings.[Fig 3.19] In the studio, dancers have the greatest freedom to explore personal ideas without the pressure of outcome or audience. This is the most intimate and uninhibited phase, where creative possibilities are at their richest. During rehearsals, the focus shifts toward refining pre-set material. While minor creative adjustments may still occur, the emphasis lies more on enhancing delivery than generating new choreographic content. In performance, creativity transforms into interpretation. It becomes about embodying the role, conveying emotion, and maintaining precision. Here, dancers operate as expressive vessels, channeling earlier creative work into a coherent narrative or aesthetic experience.

This layered understanding of choreographic challenges has clarified my future direction. I realized that studio-based choreography is where I most should to intervene and explore, where the generative, expressive, and collaborative aspects of creativity are most alive and fluid.

3.2.5 Towards Research Design — Reframing the Creative Journey

Through this multi-sited inquiry, I have come to understand that the choreographer today is no longer merely a performer or movement generator. The preceding sections explored dancers' creative voices through individual narratives, cultural spaces, and production environments, revealing a multi-layered ecosystem in which choreography is shaped not only by bodily practice, but also by interpersonal dynamics, spatial affordances, and project structures. This investigation has led me to view creativity not as a fixed trait, but as a relational and situated process, that is continuously shaped by cultural, material, and collaborative contexts.

To sustain creative growth within such a dynamic environment, dancers must cultivate a dual capacity: emotional sensitivity and structural clarity. While embodied responsiveness enhances expressive depth, logical thinking and communication are essential for navigating interdisciplinary collaboration and the logistical demands of choreography. This balance also extends to broader forms of



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.19 Choreographic Challenges Across Studio, Rehearsal, and Performance Contexts

“management” of one’s career, of creative decisions, and of the development of a choreographic work. Today’s dancer is rarely confined to a single role. Rather, they often function as performer, educator, choreographer, and collaborator, each requiring distinct forms of agency and adaptability.

In this context, creativity also means the willingness and capacity to move beyond one’s comfort zone, whether that comfort lies in habitual bodily vocabularies or familiar cognitive patterns. Creative breakthroughs often occur when dancers are placed in unfamiliar configurations: working with new media, encountering unexpected challenges, or negotiating with collaborators who speak different aesthetic or cultural “languages.” By embracing discomfort as a generative space, dancers can unlock new pathways of movement, thought, and expression.

From both primary and secondary research, several key conditions emerge as vital for cultivating such creativity in contemporary dance. First, creativity often arises through co-creation and community interaction. Working with others, especially those from diverse cultural or stylistic backgrounds, offers dancers the opportunity to reflect on their own habits, recognize blind spots, and discover new possibilities through difference and dialogue.

Second, Creativity in dance is inherently a mixed-mode process of exploration. Dancers do not rely solely on bodily movement but also engage with language, sound, and physical interaction. In this expanded context, creativity involves an openness to non-traditional modes of expression, resisting the tendency to depend exclusively on digital or social media trends for inspiration.

These insights shape the following design-oriented question: What interaction other than communication can help choreographer get inspiration?

3.3. Phase Two: Prototyping Mixed Modes Expression, A Participatory Design

3.3.1 Ideation and Pilot: Drawing Meets Dance

Method

Building upon insights from individual narratives, cultural environments, and collaborative production contexts, the following design criteria were developed

to guide the prototyping phase. These criteria aim to support dancers' creative expression and interdisciplinary communication in hybrid artistic processes:

- **Support Nonverbal and Mixed Modes Communication**
Enable dancers to express choreographic ideas beyond bodily movement, through drawing, visual annotations, or sound, especially when collaborating with non-dance professionals.
- **Make Collaborative Processes Visible**
Provide a way to trace or externalize how ideas are formed, evolved, or influenced during collaboration, highlighting shared authorship and promoting mutual understanding.
- **Foster a Sense of Creative Autonomy**
Allow dancers to take initiative and make decisions throughout the choreographic process, not just in the execution phase, thereby reinforcing their ownership of creative contributions.
- **Accommodate the Fluidity of Choreographic Thinking**
Design tools or interactions that embrace iteration and improvisation, encouraging revisiting, reshaping, and layering of ideas rather than fixed outcomes.
- **Bridge Gaps Between Concept and Realization**
Facilitate transitions between abstract choreographic ideas and their technical or performative implementation by supporting translation across media (e.g. movement to lighting, sound, or projection).

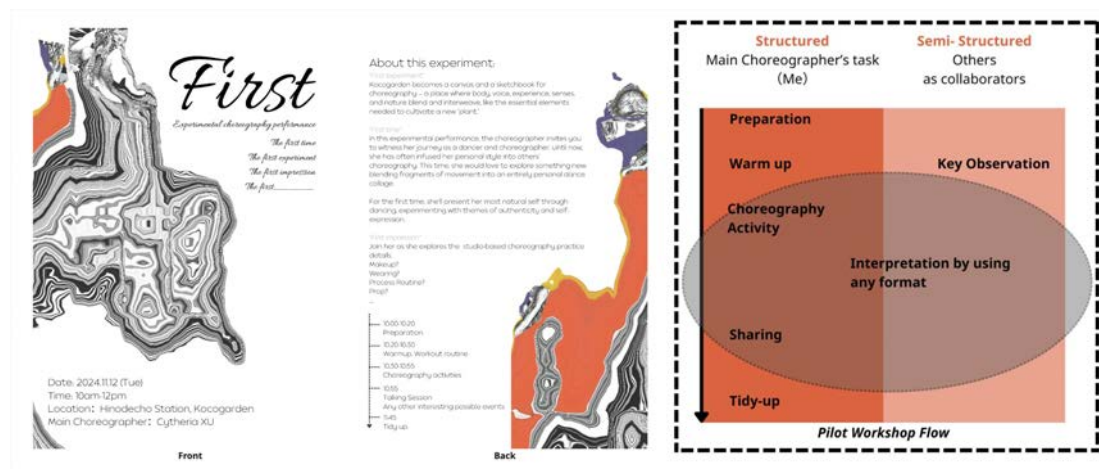
Design setting

Based on section 2.2, the ideation phase aimed to test how mixed modes stimuli and interdisciplinary participation might provoke creative breakthroughs in choreographic thinking. Recognizing that dancers often generate their strongest ideas within the studio, this prototype focused not on technical training but on mental and conceptual exploration within a studio like environment.

Kocogarden was selected as the testing ground due to its unique positioning within Koganecho Art Center, a neighborhood known for community-led artistic

revitalization. As a semi-public space along an art-centered street, Kocogarden invites spontaneous participation and serendipitous encounters, echoing the workshop’s core aim of generative exchange.

The workshop was structured into five sequential phases by mixing the understanding on the section on 2.1 and primary researching, mirroring a choreographer’s typical studio routine: (1) Preparation (e.g., setting up sound, adjusting space), (2) Physical warm-up, (3) Choreographing time, (4) Participant discussion and reflection, and (5) Cleanup. Within this frame, two “designed open zones” were embedded. First, the setting allowed for fluid public engagement, passersby or guests could join freely. Second, participants were encouraged to interfere with the dancer’s choreographic thinking using props such as ropes, colored markers, and paper to create physical or conceptual constraints. These interventions ranged from restricting the dancer’s movement (e.g., binding limbs or altering spatial constraints) to offering visual or verbal prompts, simulating external creative pressure. These designed disruptions aimed to explore how constraints can, paradoxically, serve as catalysts for innovation.



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.20 Kocogarden Pilot Choreography Workshop Poster

In total, six participants with varied artistic and design related backgrounds joined the session alongside the dancer. Their disciplinary diversity enriched the types of interactions observed. The entire workshop was documented via multi-angle video recording for later analysis.



(Source: Author's archive)

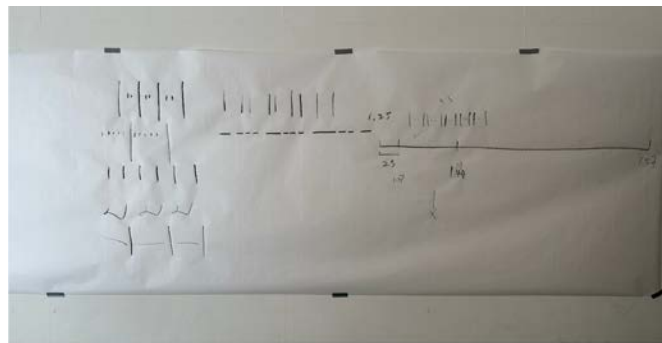
Figure 3.21 Kocogarden Pilot Choreography Workshop

Outcome overview

The outcomes of the pilot workshop can be categorized into two primary streams: those of the lead choreographer and those of the six participants(co-choreographers).

For the lead choreographer, two main outputs emerged:

- Creative Notation: A set of visual and written marks created while listening to the music, serving as a tool to organize thoughts and map emerging concepts. These marks acted as a guide for the development of movement ideas. [Fig 3.22]



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.22 Pilot Choreography Workshop Creative Notation from The Lead Choreographer

- Choreographic Material: A series of original dance sequences generated in response to both the music and the interventions introduced by participants.

These movements reflected a dynamic interplay between personal intent and external disruption. [Fig 3.23]



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.23 Pilot Choreography Workshop Choreographic Material from The Lead Choreographer

For the six participants, each engaged with the workshop through non-dance-based expressions such as writing, sketching, or visual annotation. [Fig 3.24] Using the provided materials (paper, pens, strings, etc.), they responded to the ongoing choreography with their own interpretations, ideas, and provocations.

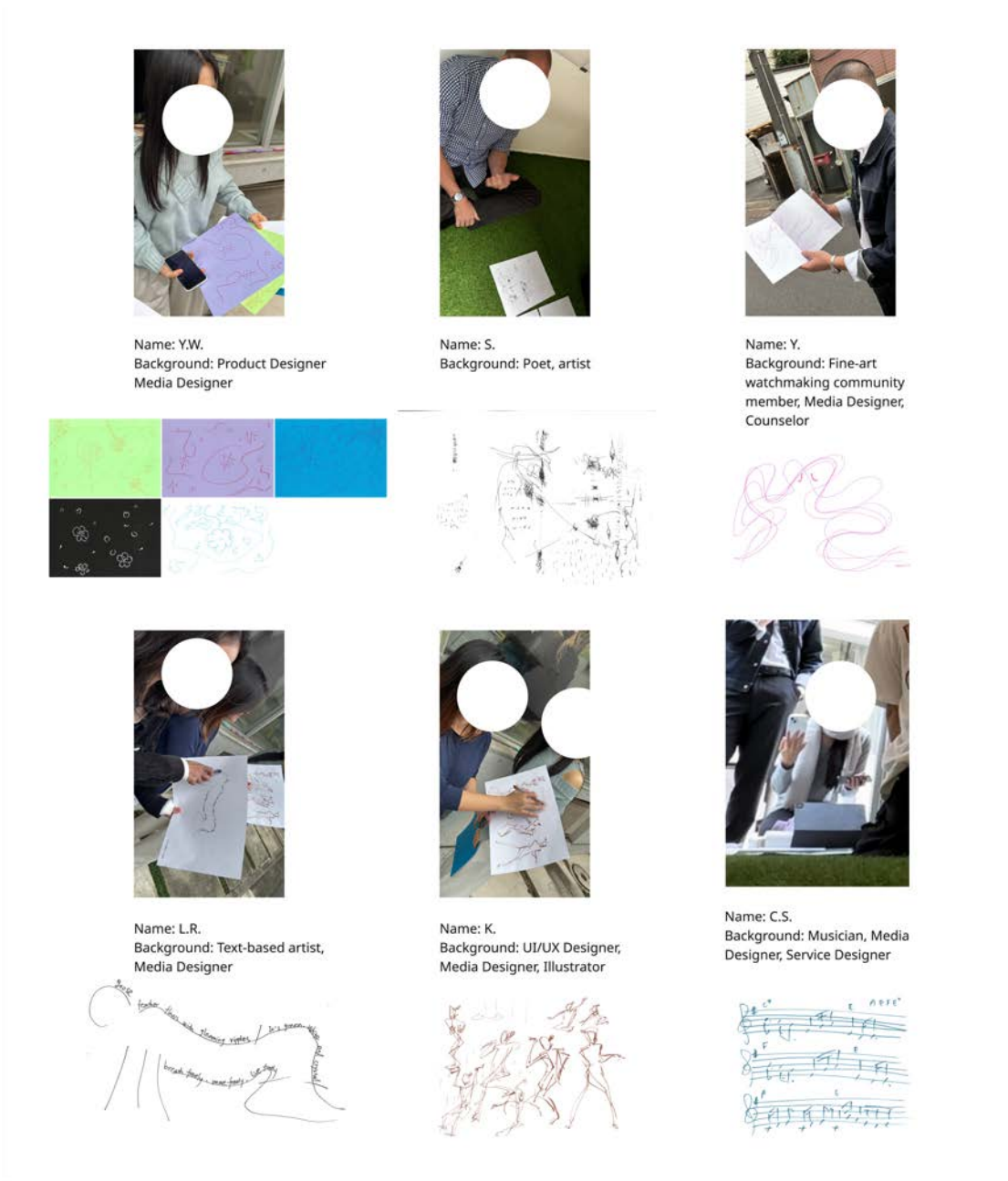
These participant's generated artifacts will be further discussed in the Feedback and Insight section, where each individual's contribution is explored in relation to their interaction with the choreographer and the creative process.

Feedback and insights from choreographer (Author)

As the lead choreographer, I discovered several important insights during the workshop.

1. The Critical Role of Creation Notes

Throughout the session, I relied heavily on my creation notes. Especially during the initial phase of listening to the music and marking beats or textures that inspired movement. This reflective process is vital to my personal creative method. I realized that, like myself, many dancers may require structured note-taking as a way to clarify emerging ideas before physically translating them into choreography.



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.24 Pilot Choreography Workshop Audiences' (Co-choreographers') Outcomes

2. Reframing through Other Perspectives

Interacting with six participants from diverse creative and professional backgrounds allowed me to view my choreographic process from new angles. Their suggestions, stemming from perspectives I wouldn't naturally adopt, helped break my creative blocks and opened pathways I hadn't considered. This shift I call "reframing through external perspectives" emerged directly from their interventions.

3. Drawing as a Communication Bridge

Many of the participants chose to use drawing and writing to express their thoughts. Despite the abstract nature of some of their ideas, visualizing them through personal drawing styles made their suggestions more tangible and easier to understand. This method served as a powerful bridge between verbal and embodied communication, especially in a multidisciplinary context.

4. The Challenge of Creative Safety Space

While Kocogarden's open and welcoming environment aligns with its mission as a community space, I found it difficult to maintain creative focus during the ideation phase. Choreographic drafting is a deeply personal and often vulnerable process. At times, I felt exposed, especially when my early-stage movements weren't fully developed or satisfactory. Knowing that I was being observed, even silently, created a sense of self, consciousness and occasional frustration, which gradually wore down my motivation to continue exploring ideas. I realized that, unlike rehearsals or performances, the choreographic phase doesn't demand performative presence; it requires psychological safety and freedom to experiment without judgment.

5. Rethinking the Role of Drawing in Timing

One final insight I noted was the placement of drawing within the process. In this workshop, drawings were introduced toward the end, after most of the choreographic work had already been done. However, I began to wonder what if drawing occurred earlier in the process? For example, what might happen if we all listened to the music together and drew our impressions

first, using these visual cues as the foundation for co-choreographic ideation? This idea is something I intend to explore in the next iteration of the design.

In this workshop, although participants didn't directly intervene and mostly chose to quietly draw on the sidelines, their presence still made me feel the need to "perform" or justify my actions. As a result, the core purpose of this workshop, the use of external interactions to trigger creative breakthroughs, was only partially fulfilled. Most of the breakthroughs happened in the final feedback conversation, not during the real-time creative flow. Any inspiration drawn from participants' drawings or ideas would need to wait until the next phase of development to be implemented. This experience has made me rethink how to better time and structure these interventions, so they can more effectively support the creative process while it is unfolding.

Feedback and Insights from Co-choreographer (Visitors/Audiences)

From the participants' perspective, the workshop offered a novel way to become part of a choreographic process, despite not performing any movement themselves. Several described a sense of "being inside" the creation, noting how the open setting and available tools (paper, pens, and drawing materials) allowed them to influence the work in an indirect yet meaningful way. For them, this nonverbal mode of engagement felt approachable and inviting, making choreography feel less distant or exclusive.

Another recurring theme in the feedback was the role of the choreographer's visual sketching system. Many participants had never encountered such a notation style for dance before. Yet because they were listening to the same music and observing how the dancer annotated her movement ideas in real time, they felt they could grasp the internal logic behind those marks. One participant reflected:

"It was my first time seeing this kind of language emerge from dance. I couldn't draw it myself, but I didn't really need to just seeing it happen made me understand part of the choreographic idea."

This illustrates how even abstract or unfamiliar expressive systems, when shared in context, can become communicative tools that connect dancer and non-dancer, creator and collaborator. By visualizing thought processes normally hidden from

view, the workshop demystified choreography and invited others into its conceptual space.

3.3.2 Insights Deliver to Final Design

Reflecting on the outcomes of the previous pilot workshop at Kocogarden, several key insights directly informed the Final Design, a studio-based practice framework. First, the use of drawing as a medium for communication proved highly effective in fostering dialogue around abstract and complex choreographic ideas. [Section 2.2] Participants regardless of their background were able to engage meaningfully with the dancer's process, offering feedback and perspectives through their sketches. This confirmed drawing's potential as a powerful, mixed modes tool for bridging different creative languages.

Second, while the drawing and exchange process in the pilot workshop took place at the end of the session, it became clear that such dialogue should be moved earlier prior to the main choreographic phase. By introducing collaborative exchange at the start, the workshop can more directly intervene in moments of creative stagnation and allow for real-time influence on the choreographic flow.

Third, the open and public nature of the Kocogarden setting, while aligning with the spirit of artistic openness, also introduced emotional discomfort for the lead choreographer. The lack of privacy in a studio-based choreographic process, especially during its fragile, unfinished stages, can lead to self-censorship and reduced creative focus. Therefore, the final design will relocate to a more private dance studio to provide a secure and expressive environment conducive to deeper bodily exploration - A 'Safe Space'.

Finally, the shift in participant composition marks another intentional refinement. While the pilot workshop involved interdisciplinary collaborators from various artistic backgrounds, the final will center on peer-to-peer interaction among dancers. This change aims to explore whether the same model of mediated, collaborative exchange can support creative breakthroughs between dancers themselves, deepening the relational dynamics and examining whether co-creative mechanisms are transferable within the dance community.

3.4. ‘Safe Space’ Beyond Body: A Studio-Based Practice Framework

3.4.1 Method

While the final design took the form of three workshops, these were not the design outcome themselves. Rather, they served as practice-based explorations to test and refine a proposed creative practice framework aimed at supporting choreographers’ creativity.

I adopted a participatory design approach [39] that integrates Photovoice and Photo Elicitation methods. These two visual-based methodologies were chosen to enhance dancers’ expressive agency, facilitate embodied communication, and generate reflective insights throughout the choreographic process.

Photovoice, originally developed to empower marginalized communities, allows participants to document meaningful experiences or observations through photography. It is not only a data collection tool but also an intervention in itself, enabling participants to frame their realities and initiate dialogue. As Racadio et al. describe, Photovoice *“encourages a more democratic and participatory setting by allowing participants to focus their gaze on what matters most to them”*. [39] In the context of this study, it enables dancers to externalize abstract inspirations and reflect on their creative environments with autonomy.

Photo Elicitation, on the other hand, introduces photographs into discussion settings to stimulate deeper reflection and shared understanding. By using visual materials like drawing down as prompts, dancers can better articulate their experiences, spatial perceptions, and emotional responses especially those difficult to convey verbally. This aligns with the need for mixed modes tools in choreography that bridge gaps between kinesthetic experience and verbal/technical language. [39]

The combination of these two methods creates a dialogical and co-creative environment where visual storytelling becomes a bridge between practice and interpretation. Dancers are not only performing bodies but visual narrators of their own creative journey. Visual methods such as these can activate trust, autonomy, and critical reflection especially in interdisciplinary or socially embedded contexts. [39]

This method aligns with the goals of the Final Design.

3.4.2 Setting

Flow

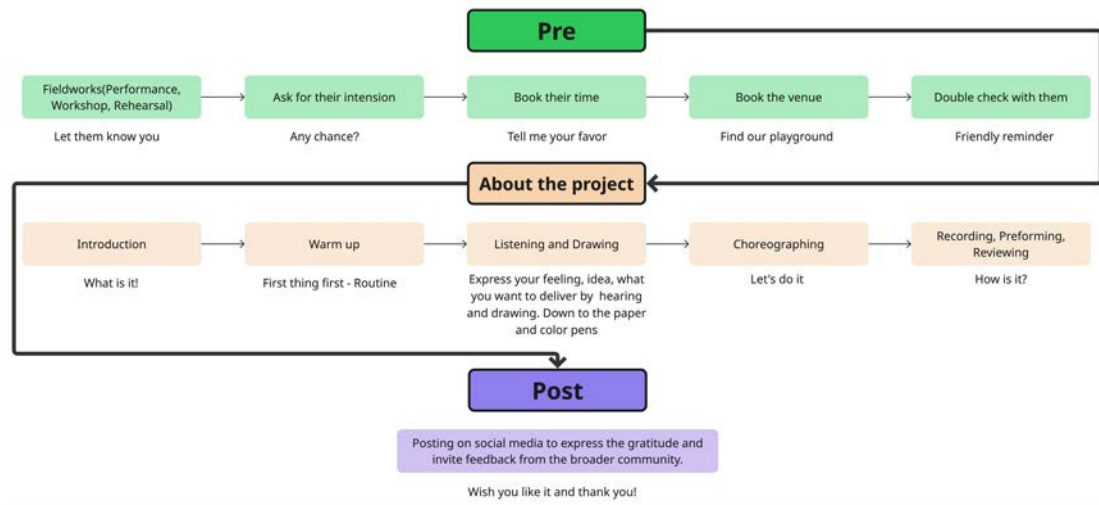
As Fig 3.25 shows, the Final Design was structured as a series of three individual sessions, each conducted with a different dancer from diverse national and stylistic backgrounds. The goal was to investigate how co-creative choreography, supported by mixed modes practices such as drawing, dialogue, and embodied improvisation, could help dancers overcome creative stagnation and expand their choreographic comfort zones.

To take a closer look at this workshop, each session followed the same core structure, as outlined in the visual flowchart shown in Fig 3.26: Introduction, Warm-up, Listening and Drawing, Choreographing, Performing and Reflecting.



(Source: Author’s Archive)

Figure 3.25 Final Design Poster and Lists of Participators



(Source: Processed Data)

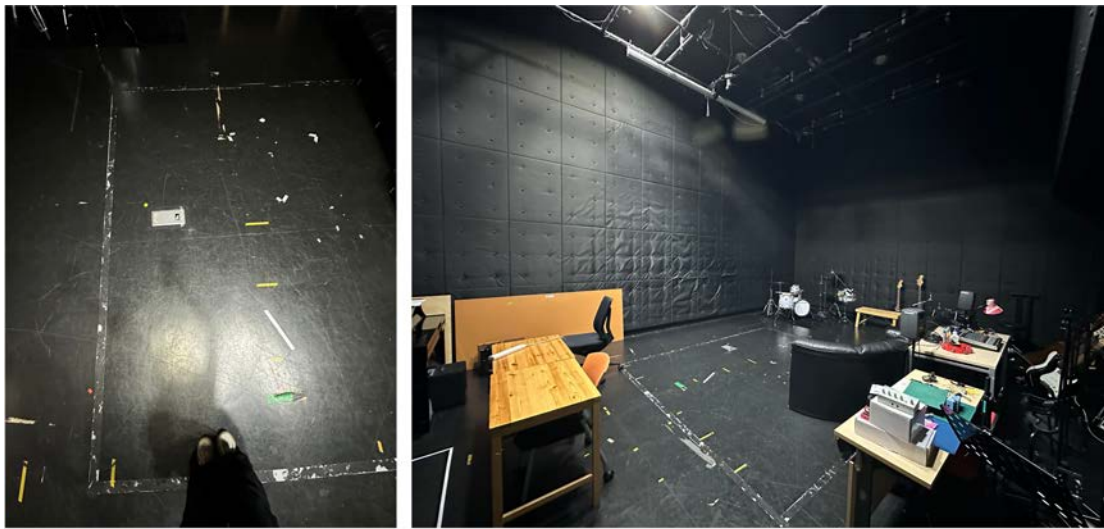
Figure 3.26 Final Design — Flow

Environment

The workshops lasted approximately two hours and took place at Keio University's Media Room (Blackbox Studio) a soundproof, customizable space specifically designed to support experimental creative practices. The controlled lighting and privacy of this setting offered participants a secure and focused environment for exploration, fostering both expressive freedom and emotional safety. [Fig 3.27]

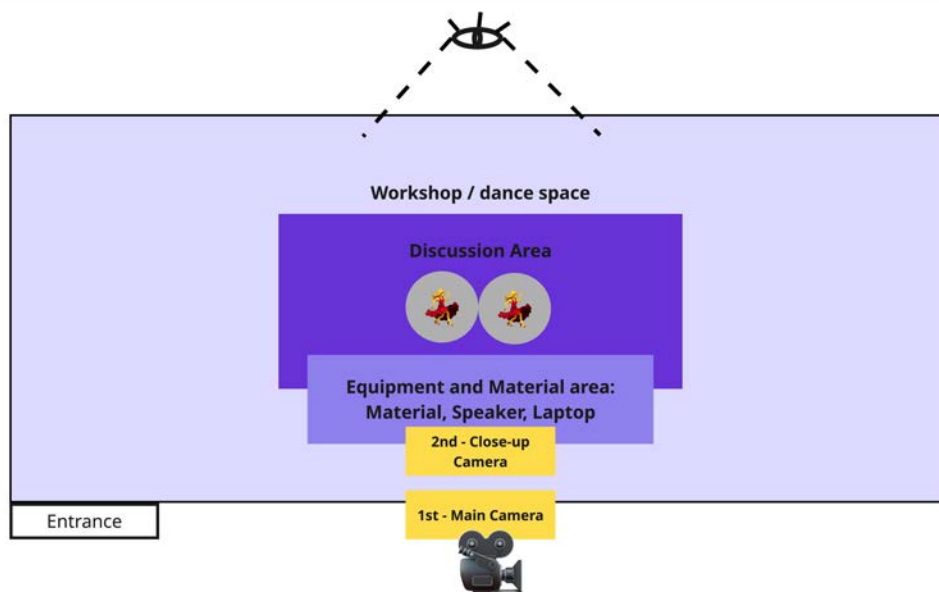
Camera Setup and Recording

The entire workshop was video-recorded to capture detailed documentation of participant activities. A fixed camera was positioned at the front of the studio space to provide a clear, wide-angle view of the full session, ensuring that all physical interactions, spatial arrangements, and creative actions were accurately recorded. For interview section in each workshop, a close-up camera was used to focus on the participants' facial expressions and subtle bodily cues, while also ensuring clear audio capture of the conversation. This multi-angle setup allowed for both comprehensive behavioral analysis and deeper interpretation of emotional and communicative nuances between dancers. [Fig 3.28]



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.27 Final Design Environment Overview — Media Studio

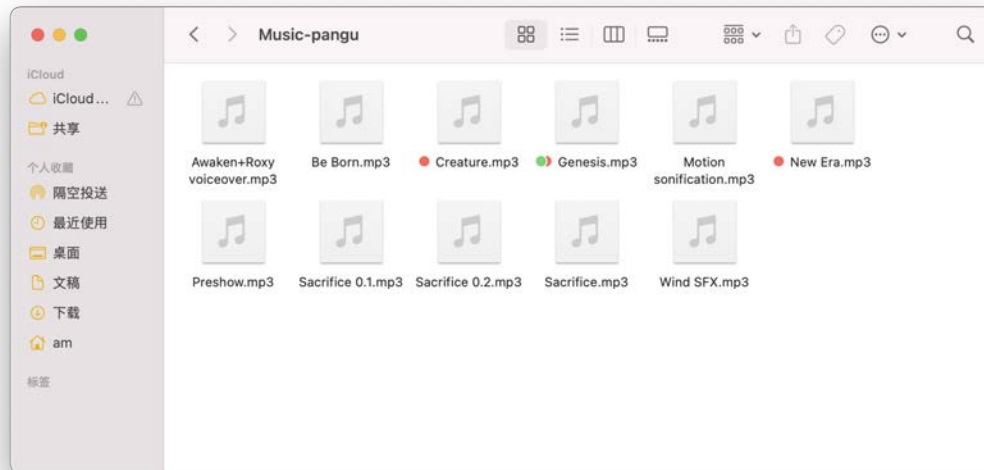


(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 3.28 Final Design — Stage Setting

Music

The music used for the choreography was generously provided by the Pangu production team, with permission for creative reuse in the research context. [Fig 3.29]



(Source: Author's Archive)

Figure 3.29 Final Design — Music Setting

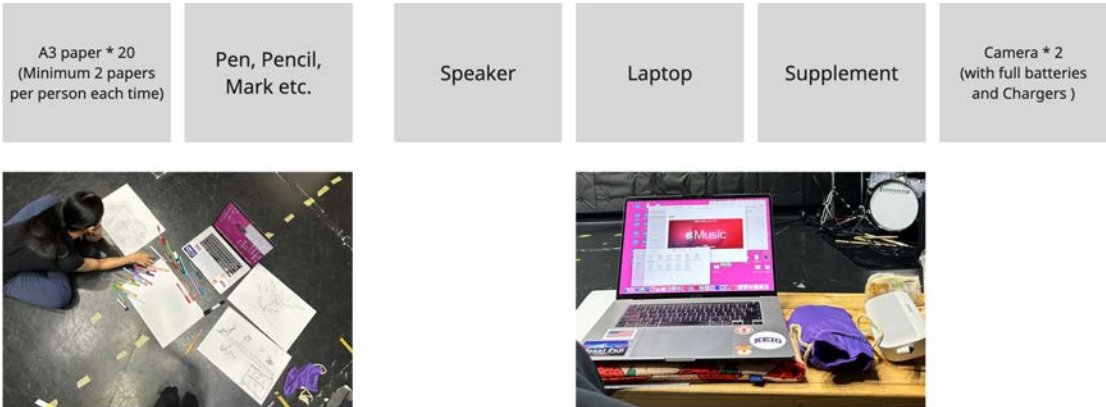
Equipments and Materials

The materials for the final were organized into two main categories, drawing and movement, comprising a total of six key components. [Fig 3.30]

1. **Paper:** A3-sized sheets were provided to allow dancers enough space to visually express their ideas. The larger format facilitated more expansive and detailed drawing, supporting a freer mode of expression during the creative process.
2. **Pens and Drawing Tools:** A variety of drawing tools were made available, including markers, colored pencils, and pens with different textures and brush sizes. These diverse materials enabled dancers to explore a wide

range of visual styles. Color choice, line quality, and drawing pressure were considered essential elements of expression; thus, offering a broad selection was necessary during the experimental phase.

3. **Laptop:** A laptop was used to play the selected music for choreography and to display an informational poster introducing the workshop. Presenting the poster at the beginning helped set a professional tone and guided participants into the creative atmosphere.
4. **Speakers:** High-quality audio equipment was prepared to ensure clear and immersive sound. Good sound quality is essential in dance and choreography, as it helps dancers perceive musical details and emotional layers, enhancing their engagement with the movement.
5. **Supplements:** Water and snacks containing sugar were provided to support participants’ physical well-being throughout the session. As a researcher, anticipating and preparing for physical needs was an important aspect of ensuring participant safety and comfort.
6. **Recording Equipment:** For details on the video and audio documentation setup, please refer to the “Camera Setup and Recording” section above.



(Source: Author’s Archive)

Figure 3.30 Final Design — Equipments and Materials

Author — As a part of design in this flow

As the designer and researcher, I assumed a hybrid role throughout the process: simultaneously acting as facilitator, co-creator, and observer. This positioning fostered a sense of closeness and horizontal collaboration, allowing dancers to feel emotionally safe and intellectually engaged. The recording process, combined with my embodied presence in the workshop, also enabled triangulation between observed behavior, verbal reflections, and post-workshop interviews, enriching the insight into how mixed modes tools influenced creative decision-making.

This Final Workshop directly embodied the central research aim: to explore how mixed modes practices and collaborative frameworks can support the emergence of creative ideas in choreography.

3.4.3 Expected Choreography Outcomes

The outcomes of the Final Workshop were two parts:

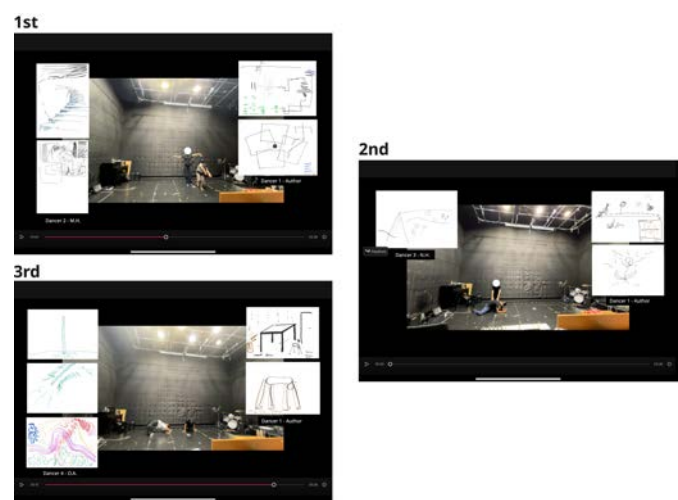
1. Choreographic Work (Video Format)

Each workshop concluded with a collaboratively generated movement sequence, captured through multi-angle video recording. These choreographic pieces served not only as performance artifacts but also as reflections of the dancers' co-creative processes, shaped by real-time interaction and mixed modes exploration. [Fig 3.31]

2. Creative Sketches (Paper-Based Expression)

In addition to movement, all participants produced visual sketches ,drawings, annotations, or written, reflections on paper during the "Listening and Drawing" phase. These sketches provided valuable insight into how dancers externalized emotions, rhythms, and abstract concepts before and during choreography. The use of nonverbal media supported deeper self-expression and helped reveal personal creative strategies that might otherwise remain implicit. [Fig 3.32]

Together, these two formats visual and embodied captured the workshop's mixed modes nature and documented both the tangible and intangible aspects of creative exchange.



(Source: Author’s Archive)

Figure 3.31 Final Workshop Outcomes — Choreographic Work

	Dancer 1		Dancer 2, 3, 4		
1st Workshop					
2nd Workshop					
3rd Workshop					

(Source: Author’s Archive)

Figure 3.32 Final Workshop Outcomes — Creative Sketches

Chapter 4

Validation

4.1. Methodology

This chapter presents the key findings of the research by analyzing data collected through participatory workshops, interviews, and observational methods. The aim is to validate the proposed design framework by examining how the **Five design components** and **Self-Determination Theory (SDT)** dimensions were reflected in participants' behaviors and interactions throughout the choreographic process. Through a multi-layered evaluation of dancers' creative engagement, communicative practices, and collaborative dynamics, this chapter sheds light on how the designed interventions supported or challenged the emergence of autonomy, competence, and relatedness in choreography.

To support this inquiry, the research adopts a multi-method approach rooted in **Autoethnography** [40] [41] and **Contextual Design (CD)** [42] [43] [44]. Informed by CD's modeling techniques, I constructed four key models relevant to my research focus, pairing them to visually represent key dynamics that occurred throughout the workshop processes. These models serve to map choreographic ideation and collaboration in both individual and collective contexts. Specifically, to examine mixed modes interaction, notably the use of drawing within choreography. Moreover, I used sequential numerical indexing to mark participants' drawing behavior. This visualization helps reconstruct their evolving thought processes and emotional responses, making implicit mental activity more accessible to interpretation.

Rationale for using the **Four Contextual Design Models**: In order to capture the layered, embodied, and communicative nature of co-creative choreography workshops, I applied four adapted models from the Contextual Design framework: Flow Model, Artifact Model, Sequence Model, and Identity Model. Each model

targets a different analytical lens to reveal insights not only about dancers' behaviors but also about their shifting roles, emotional dynamics, and creative choices within mixed modes collaboration.

- Flow Model

Used to understand how communication and responsibility were distributed among participants (dancers, facilitator, tools) during the workshop. It maps out verbal and non-verbal exchanges, identifying dominant voices, feedback loops, and direction of influence.

It helps answer: How are decisions made? Who leads, who follows?

- Artifact Model

Focused on how external materials such as drawings, music, and written sketches influenced dancers' decisions. It reveals how artifacts were used, annotated, or ignored, offering insights into how dancers externalize and develop creative ideas.

It helps answer: Which tools helped spark creativity or caused friction?

- Sequence Model

Mapped the step-by-step behavior of dancers during specific tasks (e.g., translating a drawing into movement). It highlights moments of pause, hesitation, and decision-making.

It helps answer: Where did dancers get stuck? What kind of support did they need?

- Identity Model

Explored the dancers' internal mindset shifts and reflections on creative identity through quotes and behaviors. This model helped assess emotional and psychological changes triggered by the co-creative process.

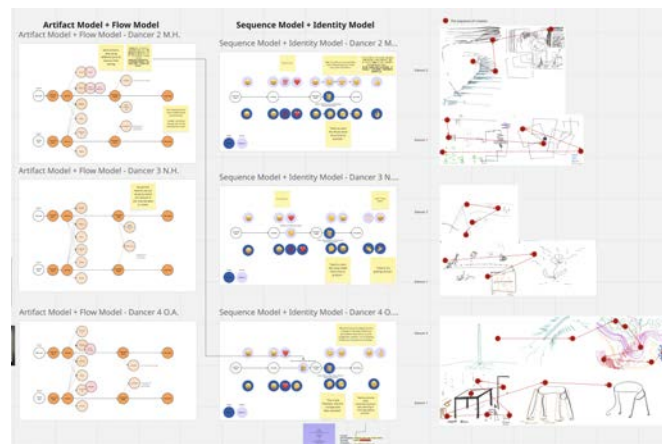
It helps answer: How did collaboration reshape their creative self-image?

Why the Models Were Paired?

To deepen the analysis, I visualized the four models in two strategic pairings, each reflecting a specific layer of interaction during the workshop: [Fig 4.1]

1. Artifact Model + Flow Model:

These two models were placed together to visualize how external creative



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.1 Four Contextual Design Models Data Overview

tools and internal communication flows worked in tandem. This pairing provides a holistic view of how material artifacts influenced verbal and non-verbal collaboration, essential for understanding how movement ideas were negotiated, modified, or shared.

2. Sequence Model + Identity Model:

These models were combined to capture the temporal and emotional dynamics of the workshop. The sequence model revealed friction points and step-wise decisions, while the identity model illuminated how dancers felt during those moments. This pairing helps highlight where in the process creative breakthroughs or confusions occurred, offering a clearer picture of cognitive-emotional patterns in choreography.

The findings are presented through two interrelated dimensions:

1. First, from the perspective of a choreographer and co-creator, I reflect on my own creative process throughout both the experimental and final workshops. This includes an SDT, informed analysis of how autonomy, competence, and relatedness were experienced or challenged during moments of breakthrough, uncertainty, or co-creation.
2. Second, from the perspective of a researcher-observer, I analyze the behaviors, interactions, and reflections of my collaborators (Dancer 2, Dancer 3,

and Dancer 4) during the final workshops. This analysis focuses on how the proposed design components materialized in their actions and responses, highlighting what kinds of interventions facilitated or hindered co-creative momentum.

By combining contextual modeling, autoethnographic reflection, and interaction analysis, this chapter lays the foundation for understanding how mixed modes practices and participatory frameworks can support dancers' creative journeys within interdisciplinary, studio-based environments.

4.2. Evaluation Premise

4.2.1 Application of Self-Determination Theory

This study adopts Self-Determination Theory (SDT) not only as a conceptual framework but also as an evaluative lens through which the effectiveness and meaningfulness of the workshop process are assessed. Rather than focusing on the artistic output alone, this evaluation centers on how the design of the experience supported three innate psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness. These needs are essential for fostering intrinsic motivation, especially in creative and collaborative environments like choreographic co-creation. [Section 2.1.4]

Autonomy — Supporting Self-Directed Creative Action

This project considers whether participants, myself included, were able to engage with the choreography process in a self-directed and volitional manner. Were there enough open-ended spaces for choice-making? Did the structure enable personal ownership over movement ideas and artistic direction? The role of autonomy also involves evaluating whether the space felt psychologically safe enough for individuals to take expressive risks without fear of judgment or failure.

Competence — Building Confidence through Clarity and Feedback

Competence is assessed by examining how participants navigated the creative challenges: Were they able to feel capable of generating and refining movement? Did the design provide useful scaffolds, such as time boundaries, drawing as notation, or feedback moments, that supported a sense of progress and clarity? The ability to complete a choreography, or to see one's idea realized in tangible form (e.g., video, drawing), played a critical role in affirming competence.

Relatedness — Creating Emotional and Collaborative Safety

In collaborative art-making, relatedness is central. This dimension evaluates whether participants felt emotionally connected to each other, whether mutual respect and attentiveness were present, and whether the workshop design encouraged interaction beyond technical collaboration. Non-verbal tools like drawing, and the shared focus on music and movement without digital distractions, are seen as potential enhancers of this creative bond.

By evaluating the workshop structure through these three dimensions, this project highlights not only how design affects dancers' motivation but also how facilitation and environment contribute to making creativity feel sustainable, empowering, and personally meaningful.

4.2.2 Five Components

This final workshop is not evaluated based on the quality of the final choreography or any form of performance outcome. Instead, the evaluation focuses on the processual dynamics of how creativity was supported, triggered, or challenged throughout the session. The premise for evaluation is rooted in five design principles that emerged from the insights collected in Phase 1 of this research. Each principle represents a potential condition for creative emergence, and therefore offers a lens through which participant behavior, responses, and shifts can be interpreted.

1. Creation Notes

Did the dancer actively externalize or track their creative thoughts, helping structure and reflect upon the process?

2. Reframing through Other Perspectives

Did interactions with the facilitator or prompts help the dancer shift perspective or reconsider a creative block?

3. Drawing as a Communication Bridge

Was drawing used not only as an expressive tool, but as a bridge between ideas and movement? Did it help dancers articulate their concepts or negotiate meaning?

4. Creative Safety Space

Did the environment encourage open exploration and risk-taking? Was there emotional and psychological room for failure, hesitation, or revision?

5. Timing of Interference

Were facilitative interventions (e.g. guiding questions, visual prompts) introduced at moments that supported momentum, rather than interrupting or overwhelming the process?

In order to enable readers to better understand the five components and the places and stages where they occur, the author has created a diagram [Fig 4.2], which is presented on the process of the final workshop.

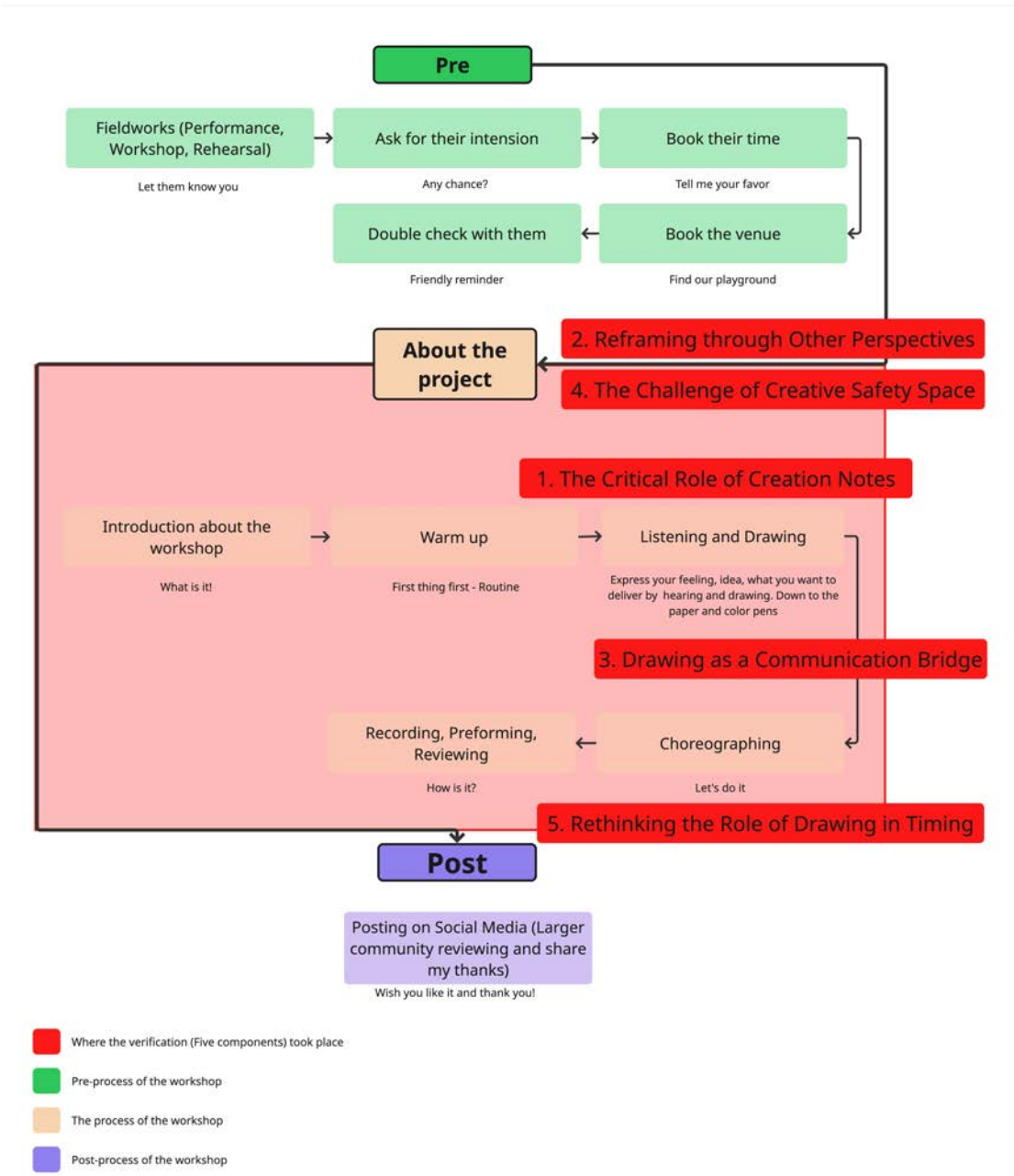
4.3. Participant Recruitment

The participants (Dancer 1,2,3,4) were selected based on three criteria:

1. Different cultural and dance training backgrounds.
2. Existing involvement in a shared dance community in Japan.
3. Demonstrated interest in collaborative or experimental movement practices.

This combination allowed for both contrast and common ground creating fertile ground for observing how mixed modes interaction unfolds in peer-to-peer co-choreographic situations.

To offer a clearer understanding of the individuals who participated in the final workshop, including the author herself as Dancer 1, this section presents four



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.2 Final Workshop Flow Map — Where The Verification (Five Components) Took Place

participant profiles. These profiles are intended to give readers insight into the internal composition of the workshop group, highlighting both its creative diversity and its limitations. The participants represent a range of dance styles and personal backgrounds, reflecting the workshop's potential for mixed modes and cross-perspective exploration. At the same time, the selection also reflects certain constraints, which will be addressed in the later discussion on research scope.[Fig 4.3 - 4.6]

4.4. Observation in The Three Workshops

This section aims to visually present what occurred during the workshop process, focusing on both participants' behaviors, such as conversation patterns, drawing sequences, and bodily gestures, and follow-up discussions during the interviews. For the behavioral analysis, I applied four models from Contextual Design, as introduced earlier in Section 4.1. These visualizations are intended to help the reader grasp not only what was said or done, but also how the creative and collaborative dynamics unfolded across different modalities.

4.4.1 1st Workshop — Dancer 1 and 2

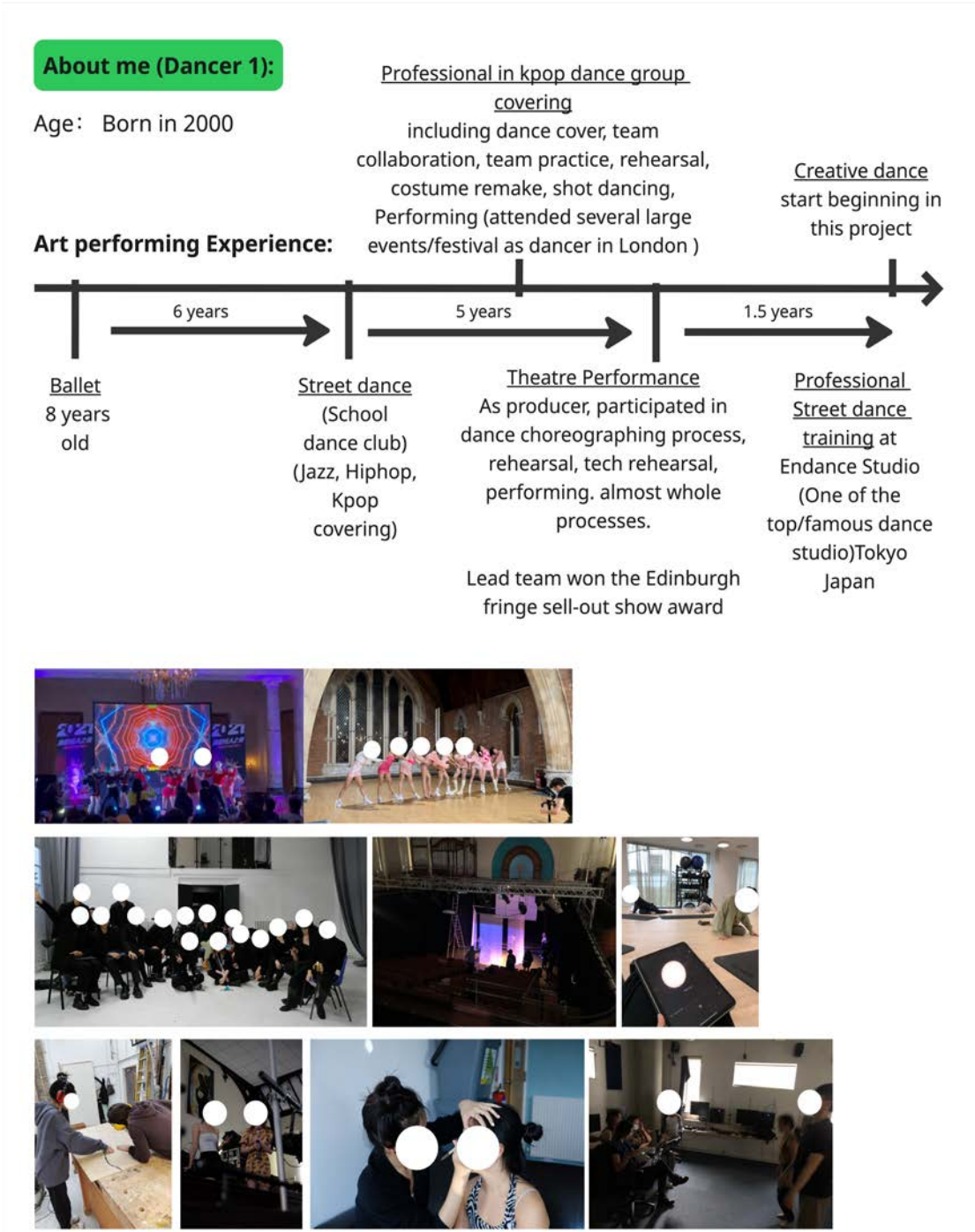
The analysis is presented in Fig 4.7 and Fig 4.8.

Background

The first individual co-creative workshop took place on May 1st, 2025, involving Dancer 1 (the author, Me) and Dancer 2 (M.H.), who is affiliated with Dance Base Yokohama. The session served not only as a practical test of the design framework but also as my initial attempt to engage in collaborative choreography as part of this research.

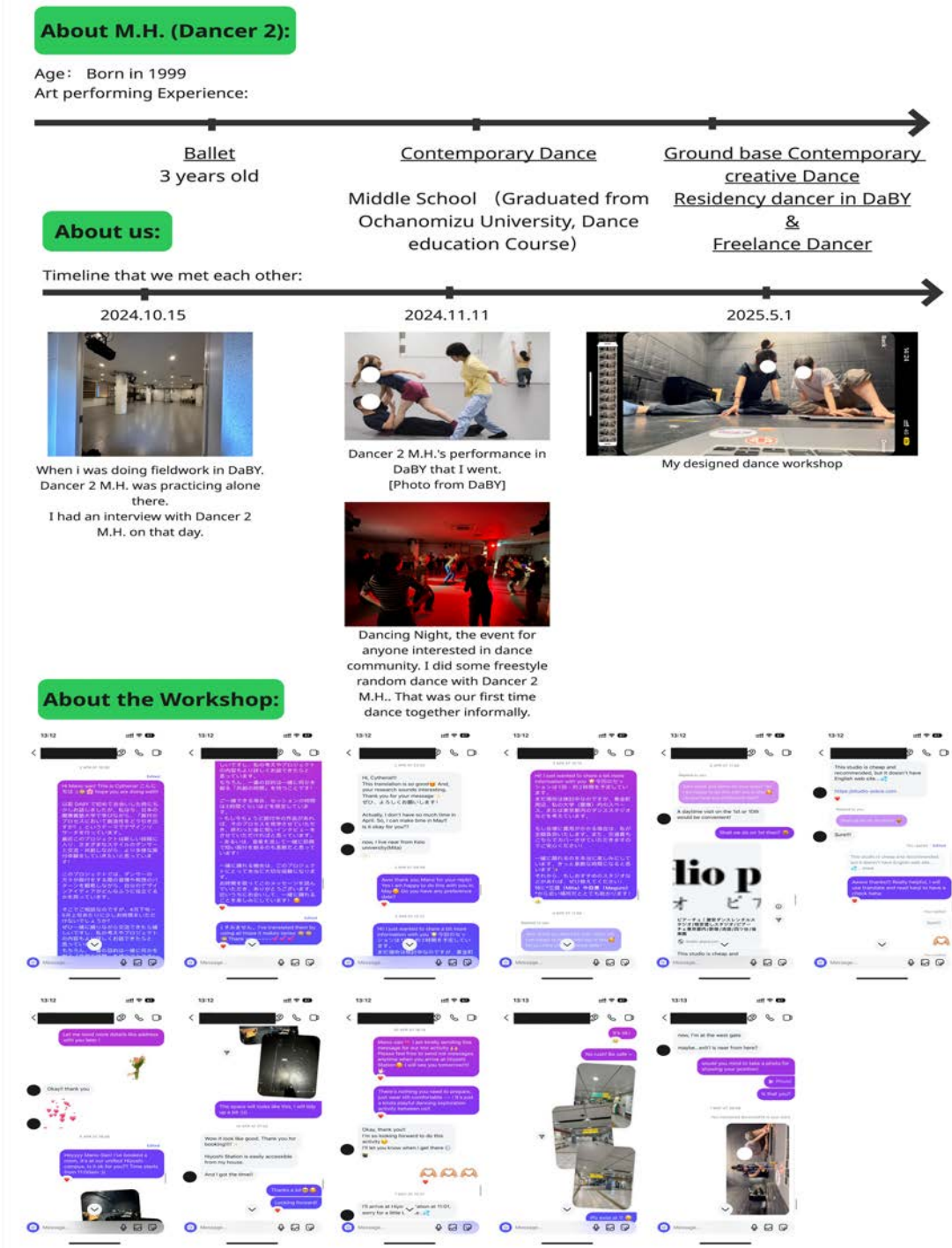
Entering the Drawing Phase: Openness and Ease

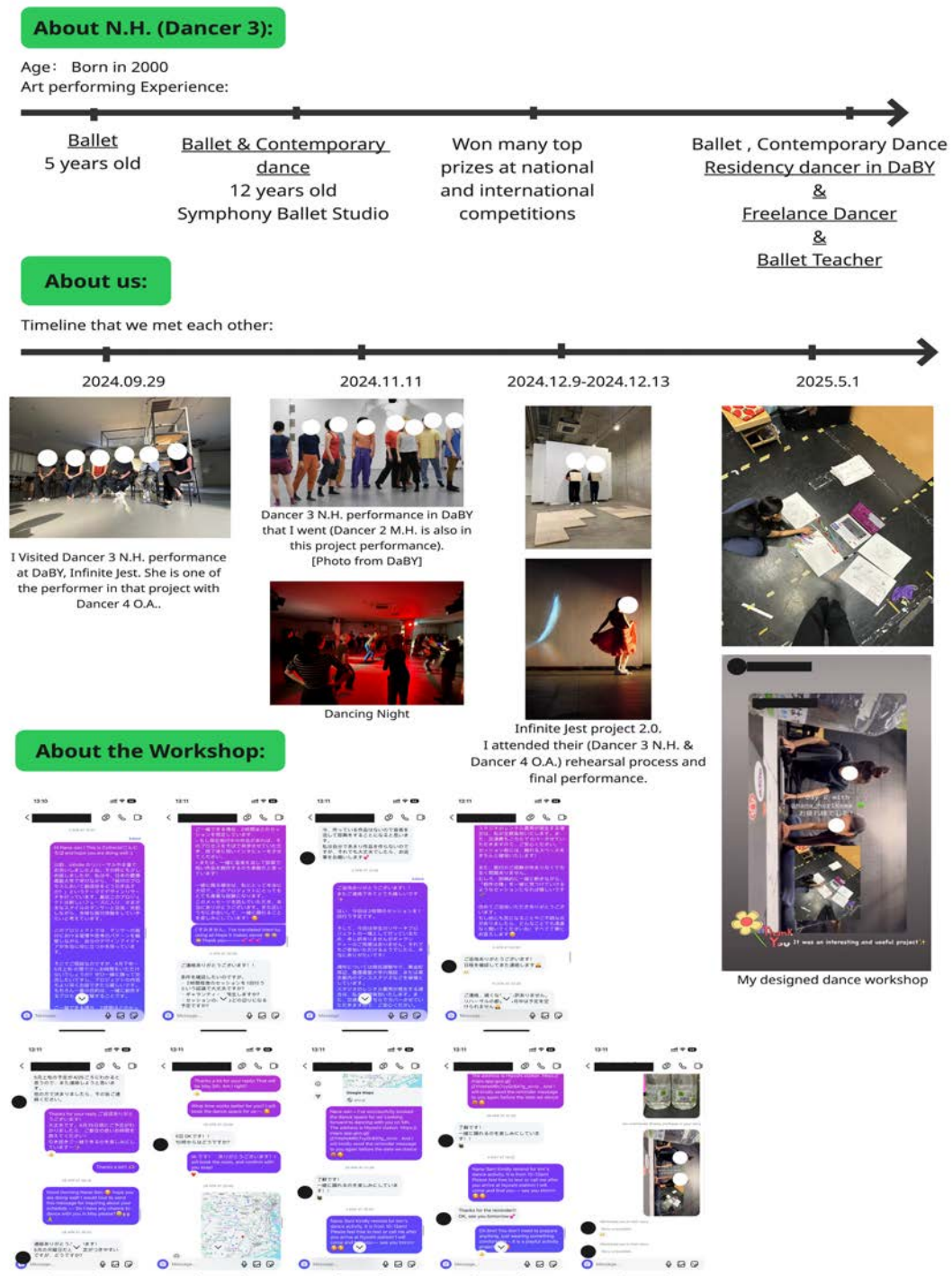
Before the session began, informal conversation revealed that M.H. had prior experience with drawing. Unlike the two other dancers in later workshops, she responded to the drawing instruction with immediate interest and comfort, display-



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.3 Final Workshop Dancer 1 — Author Background Profile





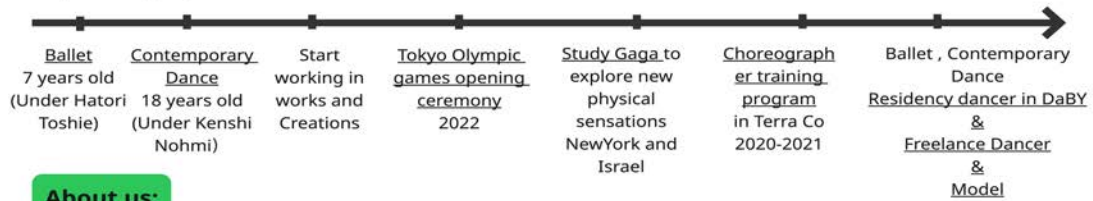
(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.5 Final Workshop Dancer 3 — N.H. Background Profile

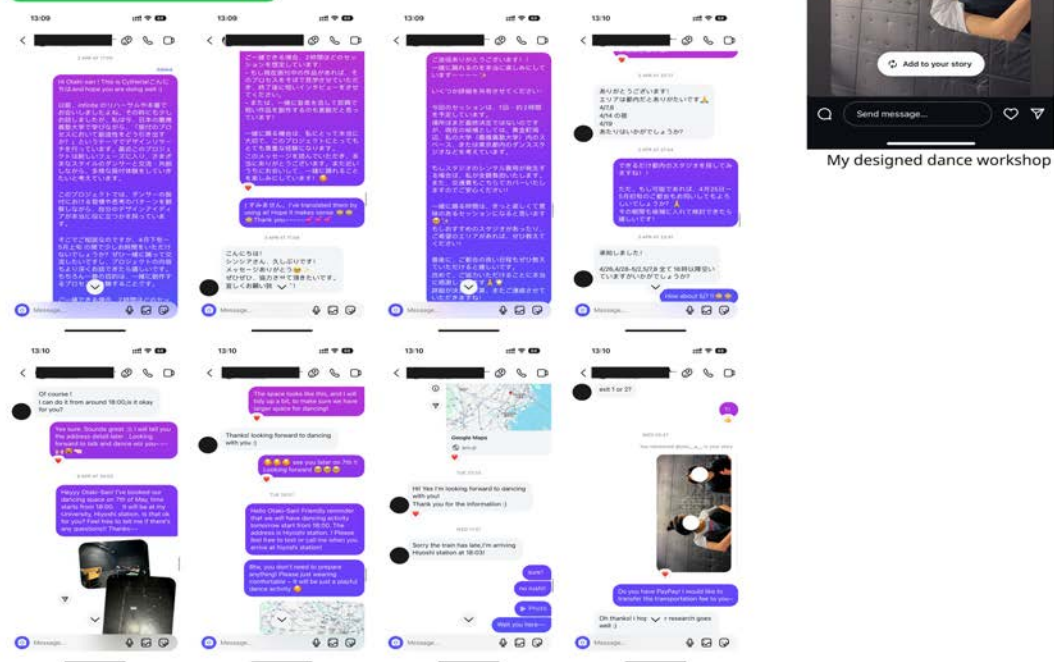
About O.A. (Dancer 4):

Age: Born in 1997

Art performing Experience:

**About us:**

Timeline that we met each other:

**About the Workshop:**

(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.6 Final Workshop Dancer 4 — O.A. Background Profile

ing a playful attitude and even a hint of excitement. During the music-listening and drawing phase, both dancers appeared relaxed and immersed. M.H. moved fluidly between colors and line qualities, while I focused on spatial composition and musical pacing. No hesitation or confusion occurred in this phase, which laid the foundation for smooth communication later.

From Drawing to Dialogue: Mapping Mixed Modes Understanding

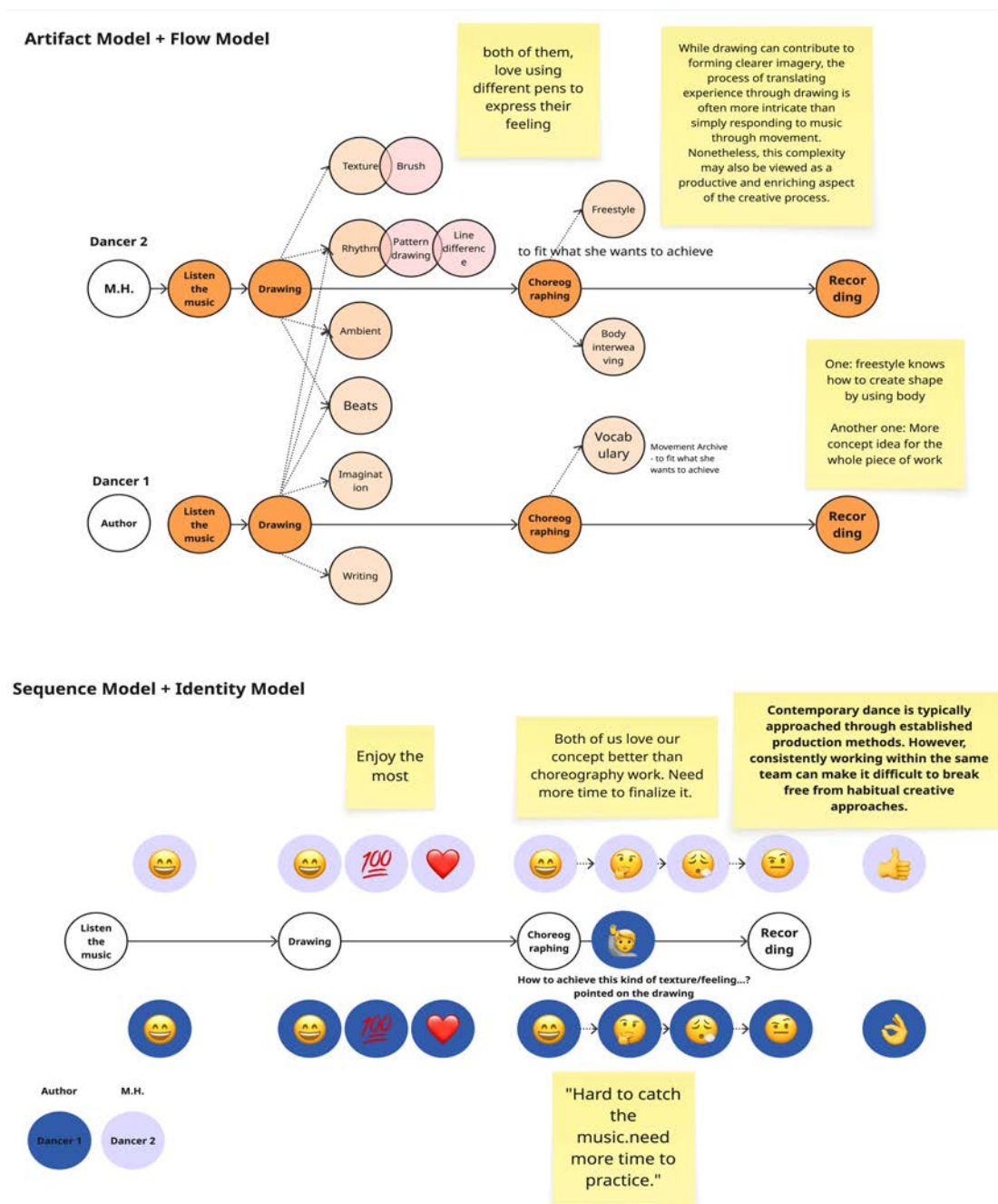
In the following sharing phase, the dancers each presented their drawings. My sketch emphasized structure, floor pathways, timing blocks, and compositional balance, reflecting her tendency to anchor choreography in rhythm and spatial layout. M.H., on the other hand, created a more intuitive visual language, using brushstroke textures and nonlinear sequencing to express movement quality. She even created comic-strip-style panels, labeling them with numeric identifiers [Fig 4.8] to indicate sequence or energy levels.

These drawings provided an instant mutual reference. I was able to grasp M.H.'s visual metaphors quickly, and the two immediately transitioned into choreography by referring directly to these visual elements. Rather than abstract discussion, the conversation was grounded in the visible, and therefore sharable, language of their sketches.

Creative Breakdown and Breakthrough: Drawing as a Re-Entry Point

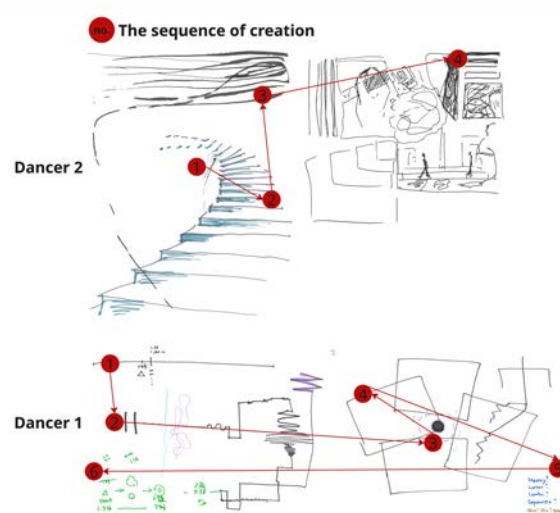
As the choreography progressed, the initial momentum slowed. I found herself struggling with translating an abstract idea into movement: *"I have a concept, but I don't know what movement to use."* In response, M.H. picked up her drawing again and pointed to the comic-like panel labeled "no.4" [Fig 4.8] and proposed a spatial metaphor, arranging their positions and directions as if forming four frames of a moving comic. She suggested aligning "Dancer 1 no.4" [Fig 4.8] with her own panel to create a rotating, four-part narrative structure.

This moment served as a clear breakthrough. It was a concrete instance of "reframing through drawing," where the visual element helped overcome verbal or conceptual blockage. I immediately understood and adapted the structure, allowing the collaboration to move forward with renewed clarity and confidence.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.7 1st Final Workshop Observation by using Four Contextual Design Model



(Source: Processed Data and Author's Archive)

Figure 4.8 1st Final Workshop — Creative Sketches

Reflection through Video and Conversation

After the choreography was completed, the dancers watched the video recording of their performance together. Both appeared curious and emotionally engaged, leaning in, reacting subtly, and watching attentively. Though the outcome was not deemed “perfect,” both dancers expressed satisfaction and enjoyment. For me, this marked her first successful completion of a 30+ second co-created choreography, something she had previously struggled to achieve alone. The presence of a partner and the act of drawing played key roles in offering both structure and motivation.

In the post-session interview, M.H. highlighted two valuable reflections. First, she noted that working with someone outside her usual team offered a refreshing creative shift:

“Contemporary dance is typically approached through established production methods. However, consistently working within the same team can make it difficult to break free from habitual creative approaches.”

Second, she reflected on the richness and challenge of using drawing in choreography:

“While drawing can contribute to forming clearer imagery, the process of translating experience through drawing is often more intricate than simply responding to music through movement. Nonetheless, this complexity may also be viewed as a productive and enriching aspect of the creative process.”

Summary: Design Principles and SDT in Action

As shown in Table 4.1.

Design Principle	Observed	Notes
Creation Notes	Yes	Drawing externalized different layers of thought—texture, structure, timing
Reframing through Perspectives	Yes	The comic-strip metaphor helped resolve a creative block and renew direction
Drawing as Communication	Yes	Visuals served as a shared language, reducing verbal negotiation effort
Creative Safety Space	Yes	Prior familiarity with drawing lowered anxiety, enabling open experimentation
Timing of Interference	Yes	Verbal prompts (“Any ideas for spacing?”) were well-received and generative

Table 4.1 Design Principles Observed in Workshop 1

4.4.2 2nd Workshop — Dancer 1 and 3

The analysis is presented in Fig 4.9 and Fig 4.10.

Background

The second individual workshop took place on May 7th, 2025, involving me (Dancer 1) and Dancer 3 (N.H.), who comes from a classical background in ballet and modern dance. Compared to the experimental tone of the first session, this workshop unfolded in a more relaxed atmosphere. However, the author faced a

new creative challenge: using the same piece of music again while attempting to produce a completely different choreographic interpretation. This condition introduced a deliberate constraint meant to test the flexibility and generative capacity of the design framework.

Entering the Drawing Phase: Hesitation and Discovery

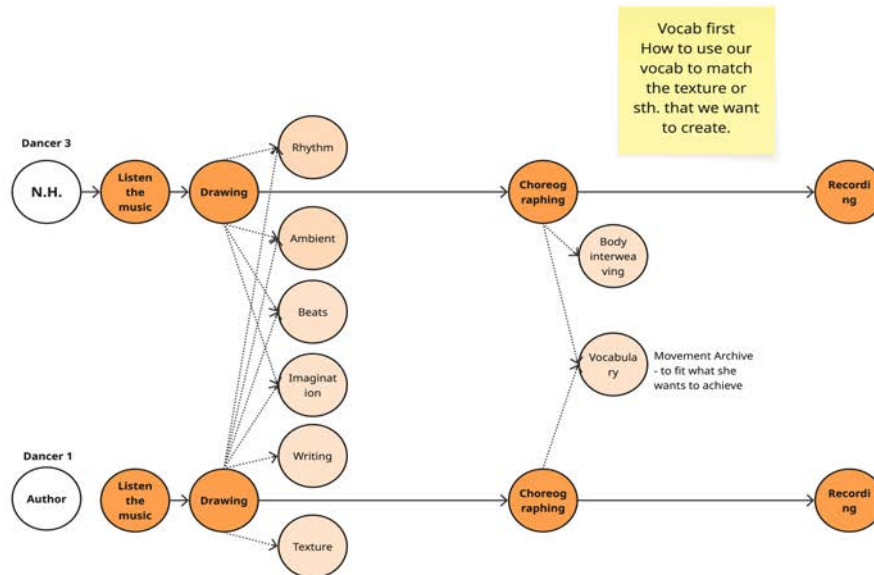
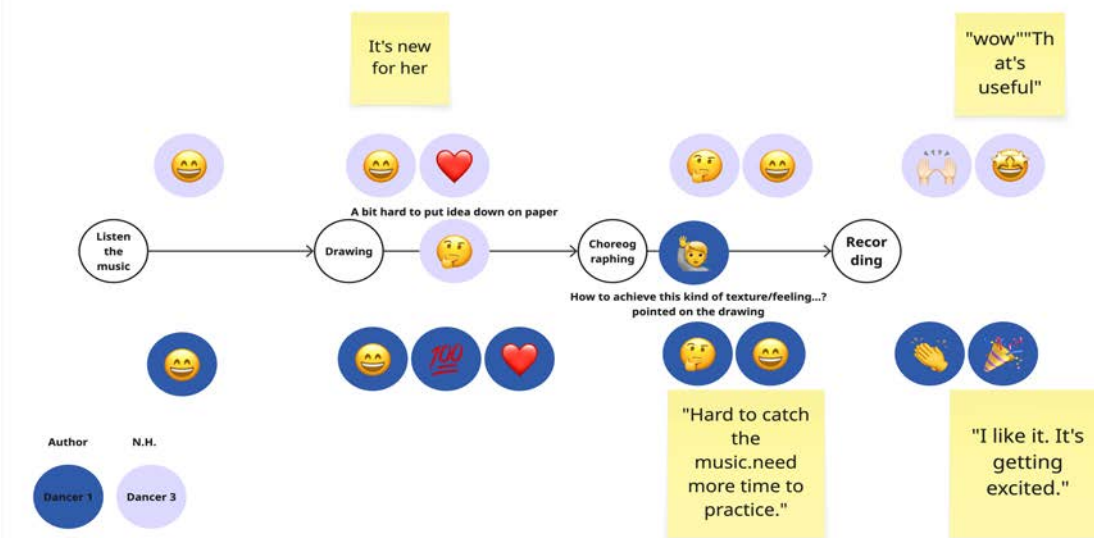
When informed that drawing would be involved, N.H. appeared visibly nervous, explaining that she had never used drawing as part of a creative process before. This initial discomfort contrasted with her strong technical training, as seen in her profile [Fig. 4.5], which highlights her focused experience in ballet and modern dance. Unlike M.H., she had rarely choreographed before, making this co-creative process unfamiliar but potentially enriching. At first, she expressed confusion and unease about why drawing was part of the choreography process. However, when I showed her the drawing and final performance created by her dance circle friend M.H. from the first workshop, she became more open and motivated to participate. Seeing a concrete example helped her understand the purpose of the step and gave her a clearer sense of direction.

Her drawing reflected her unfamiliarity. As shown in [Fig. 4.9] and her drawing notes [Fig. 4.10], her brushstrokes were relatively simple and uniform. Nevertheless, she managed to communicate a vivid concept: a tunnel-like experience inspired by her musical interpretation. Rather than detailed composition, her drawing conveyed spatial atmosphere and a strong sense of imagined scene.

In contrast, my drawing for this session centered around a theme of plant growth, which was different from the previous drawing, even though the music was the same. This illustrated how creativity can shift depending on one's emotional state, relational interaction, and context. The drawing served as a visible record of this creative renewal.

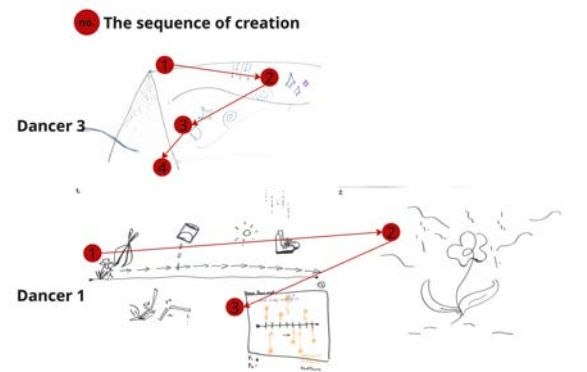
From Drawing to Choreography: Complementary Strengths

During the choreographic development, the pairing between N.H. and me revealed complementary strengths. N.H.'s technical fluency and embodied precision brought clarity and depth to the abstract textures they aimed to express. Me who

Artifact Model + Flow Model**Sequence Model + Identity Model**

(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.9 2nd Final Workshop Observation by using Four Contextual Design Model



(Source: Processed Data and Author's Archive)

Figure 4.10 2nd Final Workshop — Creative Sketches

had previous experience managing artistic projects, contributed compositional vision and spatial structuring.

Although the author had less movement vocabulary at her disposal, her ballet background allowed her to synchronize quickly with N.H., who intuitively supplied vocabulary and stylistic flourishes. This division of strengths created a balanced dynamic: one dancer contributed strategic structure, while the other enriched the phrasing and dynamic detail.

The final result was, for the author, the most satisfying outcome of the three workshops. The choreography captured the intended atmosphere with clarity and emotional weight. It conveyed layered dynamics, clean structure, and expressive nuance, fulfilling the vision seeded in the drawings.

Language Barriers and Visual Communication

Compared to the first workshop, verbal communication between the two dancers was more limited due to language differences. However, the drawing step played a key role in bridging this gap. By offering a shared visual reference point, it reduced the reliance on verbal explanation and made mutual understanding easier.

This was especially evident in their interpersonal dynamic. Before the workshop, their interactions were minimal, and a sense of unfamiliarity lingered. But through the drawing process, a form of embodied and visual communication, their connection deepened. Trust formed quickly, and a sense of mutual respect

emerged.

Reflection and Post — Workshop Dialogue

Upon reviewing their performance footage, both dancers showed clear appreciation for the final product. The facial expressions captured in the video revealed curiosity and subtle joy, underscoring their emotional investment in the process. When asked about her favorite part of the workshop, N.H. surprisingly highlighted the drawing phase. Despite her initial hesitation, she described the experience as refreshing and meaningful, opening new possibilities for nonverbal exploration.

Her feedback underscored how alternative modalities such as drawing can help overcome creative and interpersonal boundaries, especially for those with limited choreographic or visual expression experience.

Summary: Design Principles and SDT in Action

As shown in Table 4.2.

Design Principle	Observed	Notes
Creation Notes	Yes	The tunnel vs. plant growth metaphors visualized contrasting thematic intentions
Reframing through Perspectives	Yes	Drawing enabled new concepts for the same musical piece
Drawing as Communication	Yes	Aided understanding when verbal fluency was limited
Creative Safety Space	Yes	Despite initial nerves, drawing enabled confidence and enjoyment
Timing of Interference	Yes	The slower pacing allowed reflection and meaningful co-construction

Table 4.2 Design Principles Observed in Workshop 2

4.4.3 3rd Workshop — Dancer 1 and 4

The analysis is presented in Fig 4.11 and Fig 4.12.

Background

The third and final workshop took place on May 10, 2025, involving me (Dancer 1) and Dancer 4 (O.A.). Due to O.A.’s relaxed and open personality, the overall tone of the session was light and casual. However, an unexpected element emerged: a third person joined the space as an observer. While this person did not participate in the creation process, her presence subtly shifted the workshop dynamics from an intimate collaboration into a semi-public setting.

For me, this shift introduced a subtle but significant tension. The awareness of being observed made it more difficult to fully enter the creative mindset, as part of the bodily attention was drawn toward “performing” rather than freely generating. This reinforced the importance of having a safe, non-judgmental space in which dancers can express themselves honestly and authentically, without feeling the need to “act.”

Drawing Stage: Abstract Ideas Without Structure

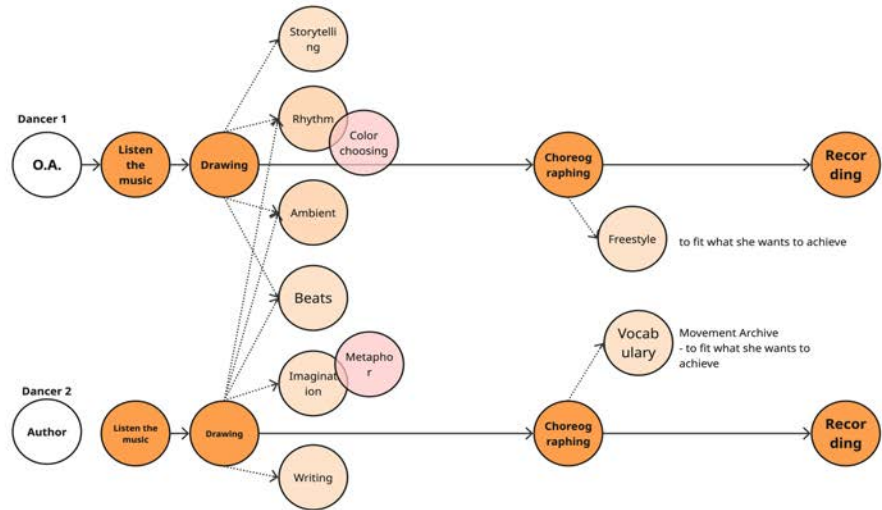
In the drawing phase, both dancers produced abstract, concept-driven sketches. Unlike the first two workshops, these drawings lacked spatial frameworks or compositional structures, such as stage positions or movement arcs. While abstract imagery has its own creative value, the absence of a structural reference made it more difficult to transition into choreographic design.

Despite this, I experienced a new wave of inspiration during the drawing session. The slower, more fluid pace of the session allowed for deeper reflection. However, the free-form style also introduced ambiguity, making it harder to anchor the next phase of choreography.

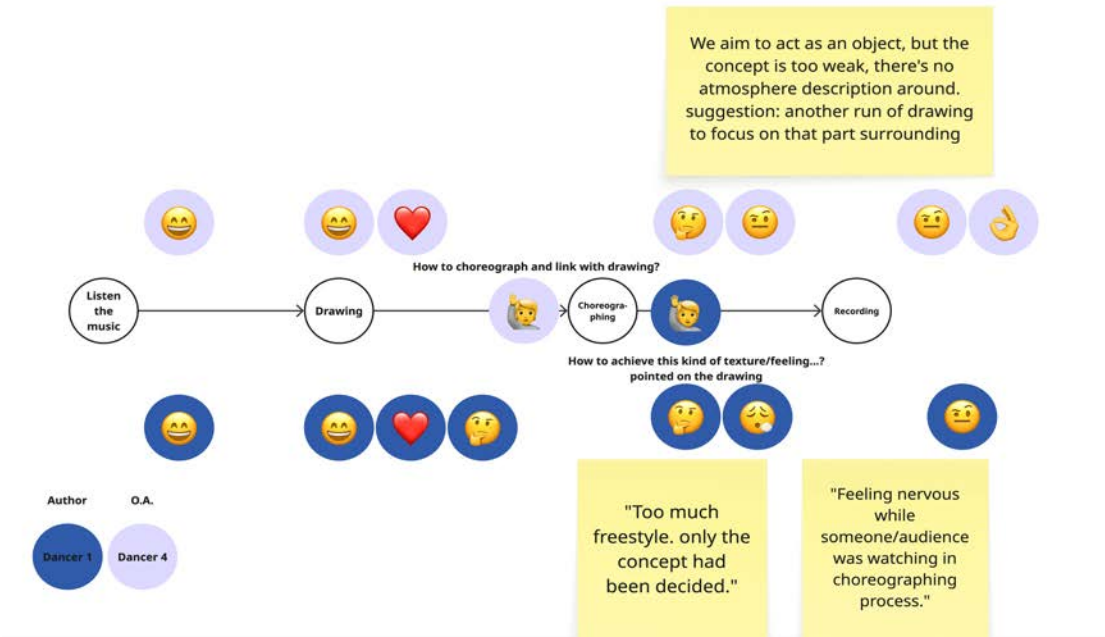
Choreographic Process: Repetitive Rhythm and Structural Challenge

The choreography followed a similar rhythmic pattern as in the first two workshops, but the resulting piece felt less cohesive. The final outcome resembled a series of freestyle segments rather than a unified dance composition. Although the

Artifact Model + Flow Model



Sequence Model + Identity Model



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 4.11 3rd Final Workshop Observation by using Four Contextual Design Model

movement had expressive qualities, it lacked a strong internal logic or narrative direction.

This limitation highlighted a potential design pivot: instead of continuing with a “horizontal” approach, composing dance by sequentially linking segments, future exploration could move toward a “vertical” structure. This would mean focusing more intensely on single moments, scenes, or emotional states, crafting deeper and more concentrated expressions within localized spaces. This idea of “vertical creativity” offers an alternative path for composition that emphasizes intensity over linearity [Fig 4.13].

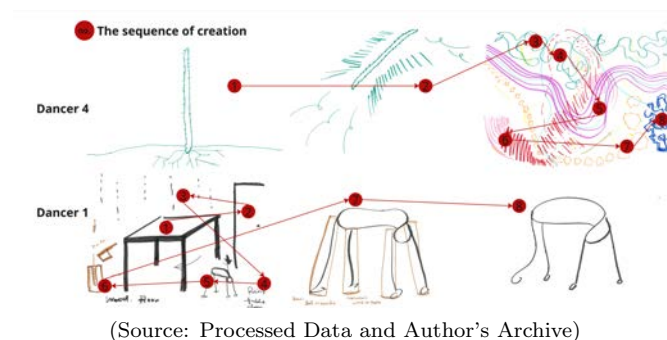


Figure 4.12 3rd Final Workshop — Creative Sketches

Reflection on Safe Space and Mixed Modes Tools

The presence of an observer reminded the author of how easily the sense of safety can be disrupted. To truly experiment and take risks in choreography, dancers need an environment where they feel psychologically safe. Even subtle shifts, like a silent third person, can affect how dancers engage with the process.

Additionally, while drawing remained an important part of the process, its abstract nature in this session offered less practical support than in earlier workshops. It did spark some ideas, but lacked the concrete communication bridge that had proven helpful in other settings.

Summary: Evaluation of Design Principles and SDT Factors

As shown in Table 4.3.

Design Principle	Present	Notes
Creation Notes	Yes	Drawings were expressive but lacked choreographic structure.
Reframing through Perspectives	Yes	Introduced the idea of “vertical choreography” as a new creative path.
Drawing as Communication	Yes	Less effective due to abstraction, but still offered conceptual cues.
Creative Safety Space	No	Compromised by third person’s presence; revealed vulnerability of space.
Timing of Interference	Yes	Slower rhythm helped spark reflection, but lacked structural guidance.

Table 4.3 Design Principles Observed in Workshop 3

4.4.4 Comparative Review of Workshop Results

Based on a comparative analysis of the three workshops, this evaluation focuses solely on the level of satisfaction and completeness observed in each choreographic outcome.[Fig 4.13]

4.5. Insights from Different Actors

Dancer 1/ Author/ SDT

In analyzing my own evolving motivation as a choreographer during this research process, I draw upon the three core psychological needs outlined by Self-Determination Theory (SDT): autonomy, competence, and relatedness. Each played a pivotal role in shaping how I approached and sustained creative engagement. [Section 2.1.4]

- **Autonomy:** From Uncertainty to Self-Driven Creation

Before initiating this research, I had a strong desire to choreograph, yet lacked the inner drive to complete a full piece. In early attempts, the absence of structure and clarity made the act of “finishing” feel overwhelming. In my first experimental workshop, I worked in an open public space and

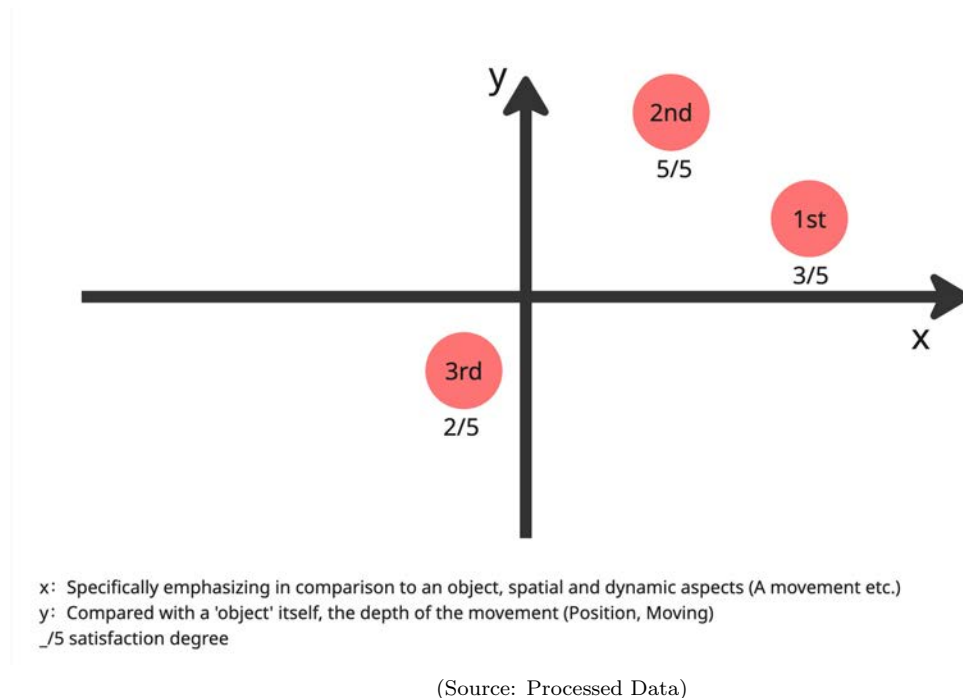


Figure 4.13 Comparative Review of Workshop Results

did not define a clear choreographic goal. I felt exposed, both physically and emotionally, which hindered my ability to fully commit to the creative process. This experience highlighted that autonomy is not simply about freedom, but also about having the conditions that support intentional and self-directed action.

In contrast, during the final workshop, I clearly set a choreography objective and filming deadline in advance. Having a defined outcome made the work feel “touchable”, a reachable goal, thereby activating my sense of authorship and personal investment. Despite using the same piece of music in all three sessions, I never felt stuck or repetitive. Each time I listened, I discovered new textures, and this freshness came from my autonomous, present-moment engagement with the dancers and sound.

- **Competence:** Navigating Constraints with Tools and Targets

Earlier in my journey, I struggled to move from concept to execution. My ideas felt bigger than what I could physically express, and without a sense of

closure in past projects, I questioned my capability to choreograph. In the experimental workshop, the lack of time boundaries and a loosely defined structure made it difficult to assess whether I was making progress. This undermined my sense of competence.

In the final workshops, two things helped rebuild that sense:

1. First, I established time targets for creating movement material, which gave me measurable checkpoints to track my progress.
2. Second, I made extensive use of visual notation, especially drawing, as a feedback tool. Through sketching movement concepts or spatial designs, I was able to externalize abstract ideas and better understand the stages of my process. Drawing became my own form of “notation” a visual mirror that reflected where I was in the choreographic flow.

Additionally, I realized that my ability to conceptualize and plan far exceeded my freestyle movement vocabulary. While I had creative ideas, I often couldn’t physically manifest them with the same fluidity as my dancer collaborators. This discrepancy revealed a new area for development: the potential value of embedding freestyle improvisation training into future workshops, not just for participants, but for myself.

- **Relatedness:** Collaboration as a Source of Creative Safety

One of the most transformative insights came from my experience of working with dancers rather than alone. In earlier stages, choreographing by myself often left me isolated and demotivated. The open-space environment of the first workshop further amplified this distance, making it difficult to feel expressive freedom.

By contrast, the final workshop structure placed me in co-creative exchanges with three dancers from different backgrounds, each working on the same piece of music. Though I could have felt tired or bored by repeating the same musical material, the opposite happened. With each dancer, the relational dynamic was new, and I became curious about how their interpretation could inspire different directions. The collaboration made me feel emotionally safe, professionally seen, and creatively energized.

This was further reinforced by non-verbal connections. For example, during warm-ups, I didn't need to talk, but through movement, I could express my respect for dance as a shared language. Drawing also acted as a bridge between us. When verbal communication wasn't sufficient, a sketch could convey my idea clearly. It felt similar to using an image in a presentation, one visual reference often captured what words could not.

- **Additional:** A “Low-Noise” Environment and the Return to Fundamentals

Another unique element of the workshop was its disconnection from digital distractions. We used no phones, no internet, only music, bodies, and pens. This stripped-down context offered a kind of “mental quietness” that made space for listening, observing, and sensing. I was surprised by how, even with the same constraints and repeated musical content, new creative responses emerged each time. It revealed to me that novelty does not only come from external variety, but from inner attunement.

Viewing my own process through SDT allowed me to articulate how my motivation evolved from blocked and uncertain to grounded and self-determined. The interplay of clear goals, relational safety, media-based reflection, and skillful adaptation supported a sense of ownership and joy in making. These insights are not only personal reflections but offer concrete directions for designing future dance workshops that support meaningful, sustainable creative engagement.

Dancer 2,3,4/ Five Components

Across the three individual workshops, the five core components proposed in this study surfaced repeatedly as key enablers of creativity, collaboration, and self-reflection. These components not only shaped each dancer's experience, but also revealed deeper dynamics of communication, trust, and spatial conditions in creative settings.

1. **The Critical Role of Creation Notes** In each workshop, the drawing phase acted as a visual note-taking process, capturing both affective responses and structural ideas. Especially in the first and second sessions,

these drawings served as essential anchors for subsequent choreographic development. They allowed both dancers to externalize their inner imagery, facilitating clearer discussions around movement choices and spatial composition. The drawings did not merely document ideas. They actively shaped them.

2. **Reframing Through Other Perspectives** Collaboration with dancers from different stylistic and experiential backgrounds prompted the author to reconsider her own creative assumptions. For example, in the second workshop, reinterpreting the same piece of music required a fresh choreographic approach. In the first session, M.H.'s concept of "manga frames" helped the author reimagine spatial dynamics. These exchanges highlight how creative growth often arises through contrast and reflection triggered by another's perspective.
3. **Drawing as a Communication Bridge** Drawing consistently played a central role in bridging communication gaps, particularly when verbal or linguistic fluency was limited. In the second session, despite minimal prior interaction, the visual sharing of abstract forms helped the author and N.H. quickly build trust. The drawings functioned as shared maps of intention, allowing both parties to access each other's ideas without relying solely on words.
4. **The Challenge of Creative Safety Space** The third workshop revealed how fragile creative focus can become when the sense of a safe space is disrupted. The presence of a passive observer shifted the author's attention from collaborative exploration to performative self-consciousness. This underscores the importance of protecting the psychological and physical environment of co-creation, where vulnerability and experimentation can occur without external judgment.
5. **Rethinking the Role of Drawing in Timing** In all three workshops, drawing was used as a front-loaded activity to spark imagination and dialogue. However, the third session, where the drawings were highly abstract and lacked compositional clarity, invites further inquiry: could drawing be

re-introduced later in the process, as a mid-point intervention or reflection tool? Instead of serving only as an initial trigger, drawing might evolve into an iterative device, used to reframe or refine the work-in-progress.

4.6. Discussion

Mixed Modes as observed across the workshops, played a significant role in supporting motivation, a core element of SDT, by offering dancers alternative entry points for creation. The use of drawing, verbal discussion, and shared listening experiences helped alleviate communication barriers, particularly in multilingual or cross-cultural settings. Moreover, mixed modes tools supported organizational thinking in choreography. While freestyle improvisation is an important skill, sustained creative development often requires dancers to learn how to structure their ideas coherently.

A key contrast emerged between myself and the other three dancers. While they relied more on intuitive, improvisational creation, developing from movement first. I approached choreography with a pre-planned structure, focusing on composition before embodiment. My background in both production and concept development allowed me to guide the process with logical clarity, offering prompts and spatial cues to help the team build cohesive pieces. In contrast, the other dancers brought richer bodily vocabularies and more expressive movement, shaped by their extensive physical training.

This dynamic tension, between rational planning and embodied spontaneity, proved fruitful. It pushed each of us beyond our comfort zones. The combination of structured frameworks and affective improvisation stimulated co-creativity by allowing each participant to operate in their strength while exploring unfamiliar terrain. In this project, creativity was not simply about originality, but about transcending one's own habitual patterns, negotiating between emotional and analytical modes of thinking, and discovering new expressive potentials through interaction.

Community-based co-creative design further amplified these effects. By embedding the workshops within a shared space of trust, reciprocity, and mutual learning, the process aligned with SDT's emphasis on relatedness and autonomy.

Participants not only felt safer to express themselves, but were also encouraged to take ownership of the creative process. The collective viewing and recording of the final performances added a sense of celebration and public value to the private act of creation.

Furthermore, this approach resonated with the Dramaturgy position in art performing which was introduced in Section 3.2.4. That helps dancers reflect on their roles within a creative ecosystem. As in my case, I came to understand that my strength lies in structuring and framing, while I need to further cultivate improvisational fluency and movement vocabulary. This realization emerged not from solitary introspection, but from collaborative exchange.

Ultimately, this design experiment demonstrates that mixed modes tools and community dynamics can serve as powerful scaffolds for choreographic development, especially when the goal is to support both technical competence and creative exploration. These insights may inform future designs of co-creative dance workshops that aim to nurture sustainable and inclusive artistic growth.

In addition to theoretical insights, this project revealed some practical takeaways for future research and dance collaborations. Building trust with unfamiliar dancers requires more than planning and structure. It involves demonstrating genuine respect for the art form and actively participating in the process. I found that communicating my dance perspective, joining in the creative exercises, and sharing my movement experiences helped build rapport. It was important to show that I was not just an observer but part of the dancing process.

Keeping an open and inclusive mindset was equally important. Dancers come from many backgrounds, and so do their stories, techniques, and goals. Embracing these differences allowed for a richer dialogue and a greater exchange of ideas. I also realized the importance of portfolio visibility. When dancers can share their work clearly through social platforms or online portfolios, it helps potential collaborators understand their strengths and increases the chance of meaningful cooperation.

Finally, I came to believe that if a team wants to engage deeply with dance-based creation, it is important to include someone with embodied knowledge of dance. Having such a person on the team can help interpret movement ideas and provide insights that support more grounded and artistically aware outcomes.

This design experiment demonstrates that mixed modes tools and community-centered practices offer effective scaffolding for dance-based creativity. Although each step in the workshop process could be modified in format, none should be removed. As discussed in Section 4.6, other modalities could substitute drawing in the future. However, drawing in this case supported spatial imagination, embodied empathy, and connection. It gave dancers a visual bridge between movement and meaning. Future research can explore other modalities, but their impact should be carefully evaluated within the structure and purpose of the workshop.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

5.1. Conclusion

This study explored how co-creative, mixed modes, community based practices can support dancers' creativity in contemporary collaborative contexts. Dancers are increasingly expected to act not only as performers, but as creators equipped with cross-disciplinary communication skills, structural thinking, and sustained creative capacity. In such complex and evolving creative environments, this shift reflects the rising demand for originality and expressive depth in choreographic practices today.

Using an autoethnographic and participatory design approach, the research employed SDT and five researcher-defined creative support components as analytical frameworks. Three one-on-one co-creative choreography workshops were conducted in Yokohama, Japan, where I, a Chinese dancer, collaborated with three Japanese dancers from diverse stylistic and cultural backgrounds. The workshops served as an opportunity to examine how dancers respond to and engage with mixed modes co-create in real creative settings.

By using contextual design models, the research analyzed behavioral patterns, creative responses, and interactional dynamics to reveal how mixed modes tools can help dancers organize ideas, build structural clarity, and express complex emotional or conceptual content.

Findings indicate that mixed modes interaction is not only a bridge for communication but also a catalyst for creativity, allowing dancers to break habitual patterns and rethink their choreographic approaches. The co-creative environment further fostered mutual trust, intrinsic motivation, and psychological safety, critical conditions for sustaining creative engagement and exploring unfamiliar expressive territories.

5.2. Limitations

This study presents initial findings on how mixed modes, participatory workshops can support choreographic creativity, but several limitations constrain the scope and generalizability of the results. First, the participant group was small and relatively homogeneous, consisting of only three dancers: one from China and three from Japan. While cultural diversity was considered, the limited number of participants and regional concentration restricted the range of interactions and viewpoints. Additionally, all participants identified as female, and the generational and stylistic representation was limited to street dance, ballet, and contemporary dance. This makes it difficult to assess whether the design approach would resonate equally across other genres such as traditional, experimental, or social dances, or with participants from different age groups or gender identities.

Second, using drawing is not the only solution, when it comes to a different concept, another solution might be a better approach. As discussed in Section 4.6, drawing served as a valuable means for dancers to externalize structural thinking and to engage with choreography from a visual perspective. It offered a tangible layer of communication that strengthened interpersonal connection and supported sensory imagination. However, some participants noted that drawing also introduced an extra layer of translation, making the process more cognitively demanding. Therefore, future studies should explore alternative or complementary modalities, such as sound, spatial composition, or haptic interaction, to assess how different modes of engagement can facilitate or hinder creative collaboration.

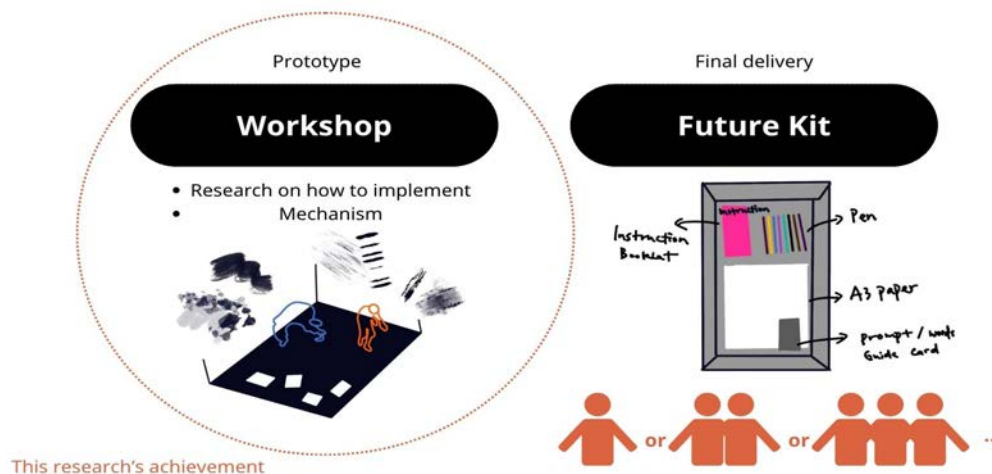
Finally, only three individual workshops were conducted, which was insufficient to fully examine all the proposed design components. While five key components were identified through early research and prototyping, only three were meaningfully explored within the available timeframe. The limited workshop duration also constrained deeper longitudinal observations of how creativity, motivation, and collaboration evolve over time. Refined dynamics, such as shifts in role negotiation, the sustained impact of visual-based interventions, or the long-term continuity of creative motivation, remain to be studied in extended or repeated sessions.

The findings may also be shaped by the specific positionality of the researcher as a Chinese facilitator working in Japan. Although this cross-cultural perspective

provided valuable insights, the linguistic and cultural framing of the workshops may have influenced participants' comfort levels, expression, or engagement. To enhance future research, it would be beneficial to include a broader and more diverse participant group and to implement multi-phase or longitudinal workshops that allow for deeper iteration, refinement, and evaluation of mixed modes design strategies.

5.3. Future Directions

One promising outcome of this study is the potential to turn the final workshop structure into a transferable, modular toolkit **“The Mixed Modes Dance Kit for Creative Choreography”**. This resource could include visual guides, material lists, equipment recommendations, and step-by-step facilitation checklists to help others replicate or adapt the process. Its core feature would be cue cards offering prompts to guide dancers through creative blocks. Beyond experienced dancers, this approach may also benefit children in early creative training, though the prompts and guidance would need to be re-designed for that target group.



(Source: Processed Data)

Figure 5.1 Deliver for The Future

References

- [1] Katalin Trencsényi. *Dramaturgy in the Making: A User's Guide for Theatre Practitioners*. Bloomsbury Methuen Drama, London, 2015.
- [2] Tadashi Suzuki. *Culture is the Body*. Shanghai Century Publishing Group, Shanghai, 2021. Chinese edition, translated version.
- [3] Sviatlana Kamarova. Autonomy support, basic needs satisfaction, motivation regulation, and well-being among elite level ballet dancers in russian speaking countries. Master's thesis, University of Jyväskylä, 2010.
- [4] George Beiswanger. Chance and design in choreography. *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 21(1):13–17, 1962. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/427633>.
- [5] Sally Gardner. Notes on choreography. *Performance Research*, 13(1):55–60, 2008. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13528160802465557>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13528160802465557>, doi:10.1080/13528160802465557.
- [6] Jan Van Dyke. Teaching choreography: Beginning with craft. *Journal of Dance Education*, 5(4):116–124, 2005. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2005.10387300>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1080/15290824.2005.10387300>, doi:10.1080/15290824.2005.10387300.
- [7] Larry Lavender Predock-Linnell and Jennifer Predock-Linnell. From improvisation to choreography: The critical bridge. *Research in Dance Education*, 2(2):195–209, 2001.
- [8] Sandra Cerny Minton. *Choreography: A Basic Approach Using Improvisation*. Human Kinetics, Champaign, IL, 4th edition, 2017.

- [9] J. Sedivy and H. Johnson. Multimodal tool support for creative tasks in the visual arts. *Knowledge-Based Systems*, 13(7):441–450, 2000. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0950705100000642>, doi:[https://doi.org/10.1016/S0950-7051\(00\)00064-2](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0950-7051(00)00064-2).
- [10] Jacqueline M Smith-Autard. *The art of dance in education*. A&C Black, 2002.
- [11] Xinyu Dou, Hanjin Li, and Lin Jia. The linkage cultivation of creative thinking and innovative thinking in dance choreography. *Thinking Skills and Creativity*, 41:100896, 2021. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1871187121001115>, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tsc.2021.100896>.
- [12] Michael J. Muller and Sarah Kuhn. Participatory design. *Commun. ACM*, 36(6):24–28, June 1993. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1145/153571.255960>, doi:10.1145/153571.255960.
- [13] Julian West Hannah Zeilig and Millie van der Byl Williams. Co-creativity: Possibilities for using the arts with people with a dementia. *Quality in Ageing and Older Adults*, 19(2):135–145, 2018. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1108/QAOA-02-2018-0008>, doi:10.1108/QAOA-02-2018-0008.
- [14] Kerry Chappell, Anna Craft, Linda Rolfe, and Veronica Jobbins. Dance partners for creativity: choreographing space for co-participative research into creativity and partnership in dance education. *Research in Dance Education*, 10(3):177–197, 2009. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14647890903324147>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1080/14647890903324147>, doi:10.1080/14647890903324147.
- [15] Gabriele Klein. *Dancing Politics: Worldmaking in Dance and Choreography*, pages 17–28. transcript Verlag, 2011. URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv1wxt9q.4>.
- [16] Huayun Zi and Ning Wang. *Choreoecology: An Introduction to the Ecological Study of Dance*. Culture and Art Publishing House, Beijing, 2012. eBook.

- [17] Christian S. M. Kronsted. *An Enactivist Model of Improvisational Dance*. PhD thesis, The University of Memphis, 2021. URL: <https://kras.lib.keio.ac.jp/dissertations-theses/enactivist-model-improvisational-dance/docview/2561962713/se-2>.
- [18] Mario Spector, Liliana Ferrari, and Graciela Yugdar. Teaching: From practice to theory. *Procedia Materials Science*, 9:548–552, 2015. International Congress of Science and Technology of Metallurgy and Materials, SAM – CONAMET 2014. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2211812815002126>, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.mspro.2015.05.028>.
- [19] Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci. Chapter 1: Overview of self-determination theory. In *Self-Determination Theory: Basic Psychological Needs in Motivation, Development, and Wellness*, pages 3–33. Guilford Press, New York, 2017.
- [20] Eleanor Quested and Joan L. Duda. Perceived autonomy support, motivation regulations and the self-evaluative tendencies of student dancers. *Journal of Dance Medicine & Science*, 15(1):3–14, 2011. PMID: 21703088. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1089313X1101500101>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1089313X1101500101>, doi:10.1177/1089313X1101500101.
- [21] Graham R Daniel. Safe spaces for enabling the creative process in classrooms. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education (Online)*, 45(8):41–57, 2020. URL: <https://search.informit.org/doi/10.3316/informit.564094590497199>.
- [22] Jeff Karabanow and Ted Naylor. Using art to tell stories and build safe spaces: Transforming academic research into action. *Canadian Journal of Community Mental Health*, 34(3):67–85, 2015.
- [23] Mary Ann Hunter. Cultivating the art of safe space. *Research in Drama Education: The Journal of Applied Theatre and Performance*, 13(1):5–21, 2008. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13569780701825195>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1080/13569780701825195>, doi:10.1080/13569780701825195.

- [24] Moe Sugawa, Taichi Furukawa, George Chernyshov, Danny Hynds, Jiawen Han, Marcelo Padovani, Dingding Zheng, Karola Marky, Kai Kunze, and Kouta Minamizawa. Boiling mind: Amplifying the audience-performer connection through sonification and visualization of heart and electrodermal activities. In *Proceedings of the Fifteenth International Conference on Tangible, Embedded, and Embodied Interaction*, TEI '21, New York, NY, USA, 2021. Association for Computing Machinery. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3430524.3440653>, doi:10.1145/3430524.3440653.
- [25] L.S. Chen, T.S. Huang, T. Miyasato, and R. Nakatsu. Multimodal human emotion/expression recognition. In *Proceedings Third IEEE International Conference on Automatic Face and Gesture Recognition*, pages 366–371, 1998. doi:10.1109/AFGR.1998.670976.
- [26] Marni Binder and Sally Kotsopoulos. Multimodal literacy narratives: Weaving the threads of young children’s identity through the arts. *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, 25(4):339–363, 2011. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2011.606762>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2011.606762>.
- [27] Susan Rosenberg. *Trisha Brown: choreography as visual art*. Wesleyan University Press, 2016.
- [28] David W. McMillan and David M. Chavis. Sense of community: A definition and theory. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 24(4):315–325, 1996.
- [29] Serenity Wise, Ralph Buck, Rose Martin, and Longqi Yu. Community dance as a democratic dialogue. *Policy Futures in Education*, 18(3):375–390, 2020. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210319866290>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210319866290>, doi:10.1177/1478210319866290.
- [30] Dale W. Schmid and Susan McGreevy-Nichols. Building the dance community virtually during covid-19. *Arts Education Policy Review*, 123(3):135–142, 2022. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2021.1931598>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1080/10632913.2021.1931598>, doi:10.1080/10632913.2021.1931598.

- [31] Nala Nandana Undiana, Irwan Sarbeni, and Arief Johari. Art residency program as a form of creative process for artist. In *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on Arts and Design Education (ICADE 2019)*, pages 92–94. Atlantis Press, 2020. URL: <https://doi.org/10.2991/assehr.k.200321.021>, doi:10.2991/assehr.k.200321.021.
- [32] Jessyca Hutchens. *A gift of time: the contemporary artist-in-residency programme*. PhD thesis, University of Oxford, 2021.
- [33] Andrés Lucero. Living without a mobile phone: An autoethnography. In *Proceedings of the 2018 Designing Interactive Systems Conference*, DIS '18, page 765–776, New York, NY, USA, 2018. Association for Computing Machinery. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3196709.3196731>, doi:10.1145/3196709.3196731.
- [34] Tami Spry. Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6):706–732, 2001.
- [35] Andrew Miller. Personalising ethnography: On memory, evidence, and subjectivity the writing & learning journey. *New Writing*, 5(2):89–113, 2008. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1080/14790720802209971>, arXiv:<https://doi.org/10.1080/14790720802209971>, doi:10.1080/14790720802209971.
- [36] William C. Adams. *Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews*, chapter 19, pages 492–505. John Wiley Sons, Ltd, 2015. URL: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19>, arXiv:<https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/pdf/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19>, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119171386.ch19>.
- [37] Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer. 6 - the affinity diagram. In Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer, editors, *Contextual Design (Second Edition)*, Interactive Technologies, pages 127–146. Morgan Kaufmann, Boston, second edition edition, 2017. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128008942000065>, doi:<https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-800894-2.00006-5>.

- [38] Bill Buxton. *Sketching User Experiences: Getting the Design Right and the Right Design*. Morgan Kaufmann, San Francisco, 2007.
- [39] Robert Racadio, Emma J. Rose, and Beth E. Kolko. Research at the margin: participatory design and community based participatory research. In *Proceedings of the 13th Participatory Design Conference: Short Papers, Industry Cases, Workshop Descriptions, Doctoral Consortium Papers, and Keynote Abstracts - Volume 2*, PDC '14, page 49–52, New York, NY, USA, 2014. Association for Computing Machinery. URL: <https://doi.org/10.1145/2662155.2662188>, doi:10.1145/2662155.2662188.
- [40] Tami Spry. Performing autoethnography: An embodied methodological praxis. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 7(6):706–732, 2001. doi:10.1177/107780040100700605.
- [41] Andrew Miller. Personalising ethnography: On memory, evidence and subjectivity. In Andrew Sparkes, editor, *Being Academic: Authorship, Memory and Identity*, pages 81–98. Routledge, London, 2008.
- [42] Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer. 5 - from data to insight: Contextual design models. In Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer, editors, *Contextual Design (Second Edition)*, Interactive Technologies, pages 109–126. Morgan Kaufmann, Boston, second edition edition, 2017. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128008942000053>, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-800894-2.00005-3>.
- [43] Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer. 10 - the bridge from data to design: The wall walk. In Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer, editors, *Contextual Design (Second Edition)*, Interactive Technologies, pages 253–275. Morgan Kaufmann, Boston, second edition edition, 2017. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128008942000107>, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-800894-2.00010-7>.
- [44] Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer. 7 - building experience models. In Karen Holtzblatt and Hugh Beyer, editors, *Contextual Design (Second Edition)*, Interactive Technologies, pages 147–206. Morgan

Kaufmann, Boston, second edition edition, 2017. URL: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/B9780128008942000077>, doi: <https://doi.org/10.1016/B978-0-12-800894-2.00007-7>.

Appendices

A. Choreographic Results Final Workshop Performance Recording

YouTube Link: <https://youtu.be/PsWkJ9vhJek?si=AQaiUjfqJjJrDmDc>