


Introduction: Migrating through the Arts: Deconstructing Alterities through new Approaches to Music and Dance Practices

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Abstract

In recent decades, there has been a growing interest in artistic practices as a lens through which to explore inequalities, navigating the intricate dynamics of mobility, citizenship and belongingness. In particular, music and dance have emerged as illuminating pathways for reimagining migration and diversity research. This transformative perspective challenges conventional categories such as “migrant,” “migration,” “diversity,” “alterity,” “North,” and “South,” exposing their normative dimensions. It invites a reconsideration of the circulations of practices, practitioners, and representations within the realms of music and dance, prompting methodological and epistemological inquiries. How can the creativity and agency of actors be reconciled with the institutional constraints they encounter? How can the cultural hybridizations and syncretism resulting from the movements of people, creations, and information be conceptualized? In what ways does a focus on music and dance practices empower scholars in migration and diversity studies to rethink normative categories and dismantle entrenched notions of alterity? This introduction seeks to provide an overview of the compelling issues emanating from research on music and dance in the context of migration and diversity studies. It explores the novel avenues opened up by this research domain, offering a platform for critical reflections on global inequalities.

Keywords: migration, music, arts, dance, belonging, alterity, diversity

The reflections presented in this special issue are rooted in a series of paradoxes that have become increasingly apparent within a contemporary landscape marked by the simultaneous acceleration of global movements of people, capital, and cultural production, the strengthening of borders (Horvath, Pape, Delcroix & Inowlocki 2022; Robertson 1995), and the crystallization of conflicts and tensions rooted in political, religious, or cultural differences (Chattopadhyay 2018). The global cultural scene in particular is characterized by a contrasted interplay between the celebration of diversity and mobility and the harsh material realities and processes of censorship that artists, specifically those from the Global South (Santos & Meneses 2020), often face.

First, a flowering of new or recently visible artistic hubs is emerging outside the traditional artistic institutions in the West, such as the Museum of Black Civilizations in Dakar, the Museum of African Contemporary Art Al Maaden in Marrakech, the Storyland Studios and Lagos Art World, or the 798 Art District Beijing, all contributing to a more diverse and interconnected global art world (Belting & Buddensieg 2009; Fratagnoli & Lassibille 2018). Nevertheless, the imposition of stringent visa and travel restrictions is inhibiting the free circulation of artists from these burgeoning Southern contexts, hindering the realization of the ideals of unrestricted physical and digital mobility associated with a globalized art community. Recent political crises in

Sub-Saharan Africa have underscored this issue, highlighting the impact of travel restrictions on African artists who already face hurdles in gaining recognition when applying for visas (Gayot and Blanchard 2023). This further emphasizes how passport-related inequalities play a significant role in shaping the dynamics of the global cultural scene.

Second, while art scenes in the West proudly champion political free speech, diversity, and critical perspectives such as the “decolonial” or the “subaltern,” this theoretical and ideological stance warrants a critical examination. The dynamics of recognition within Western liberal discourses are indeed influenced by “regulatory ideals” that determine who can or cannot be deemed an intelligible subject (Butler & Athanasiou 2013). Moreover, as noted by Neveux regarding theatre in the French context (2019), advocating “political art” often results paradoxically in the neutralization of the political dimensions of artworks, confining them to types of conformity. The author attributes this phenomenon to the reduction of art to the neoliberal obsession for functionality (ibid.: 58), arguing that there is an increasing demand for art to deliver measurable social benefits, which burdens creation with the obligation to shape citizens and cultivate a “community life” (the *vivre-ensemble*) consistent with the representation of the political class that funds it (ibid.: 74). Consequently, creation is stripped of any capacity to engage in speculative thinking about “hypotheses of alternatives” (ibid.: 233). Beyond the French context, these tendencies have become apparent in recent controversies surrounding the globally renowned *Documenta* exhibitions that take place every five years in Kassel, Germany, which, in the last twenty years, have been curated by several directors (like Okwui Enwezor, responsible in 2002) and collectives born or living outside Europe (like the Indonesian group *ruangrupa* who signed the exhibition in 2022). The debates that unfolded around certain films and artworks exposed during *documenta15* in 2022 exposed the tensions between different perceptions of the place of

the political within contemporary art. Ultimately, these debates resulted in the resignation of a substantial group from the *Documenta 2027* Finding Committee, underscoring the centrality of questions related to political statements (and their censorship) to artists’ careers and productions (*Documenta 2024*).

These paradoxes between a desired or proclaimed freedom of movement and existing actual restrictions, along with the tension between celebrating diversity and grappling with the concrete power dynamics and mechanisms of censorship or speech restrictions, give rise to inquiries that transcend the realm of global culture. These inquiries delve into the construction of social frontiers, questions of alterity and self-representation, and the dynamics of global power. Furthermore, they prompt us to scrutinize the perpetuation of problematic and essentializing categories in our social science disciplines, such as “diversity,” the dichotomy between the local and the global, or the distinctions between “economic migrants,” “refugees,” and “expatriates.”

In this Special Issue, we center our attention on music and dance practices to contribute to recent initiatives in critical migration studies that aim to reassess normative categories and distinctions, placing the emphasis on people’s agency in challenging and deconstructing categorization and othering in border regimes. How can a focus on music and dance practices inspire scholars in migration and diversity studies to reassess normative categories and deconstruct alterities that persist from both emic and etic perspectives? In what ways can a focus on dance and music practices and practitioners support us in challenging notions such as “migrant,” “migration,” “alterity,” “North,” and “South,” thereby highlighting their normative dimensions? How might we conceptualize the cultural hybridizations and syncretism generated by the movements of people, artistic creations, and information by taking into account both people’s creativity and the institutional constraints they face?

The contributions to this special issue endeavor to tackle these questions by opening up new per-

spectives on the movements of practices, practitioners, and representations of music and dance. By delving into the realms of music and dance practices and their practitioners, exploring their mobility and the obstacles they encounter, the authors raise new epistemological and ethical questions that are inherent in critical migration and diversity studies. Moreover, they shed light on how such a focus reveals asymmetries and power relationships that extend beyond art worlds, permeating representations of alterity and echoing in global economic and political disparities. Lastly, they demonstrate the instrumentality of in-depth ethnographic approaches in comprehending how categories are constructed, perpetuated, reversed, or strategically employed by institutions and migrating artists. To achieve this, the contributions draw on insights from migration and globalization studies, along with original research material delving into the significance of music and dance within these fields.

Overall, the Special Issue showcases the contribution that research on music and dance can offer to scholarship on borders and mobilities. Since the 1990s, the “mobility turn” has undeniably spurred significant advances in the social sciences. By embracing an analytical framework that shifts the focus towards human movement, rather than perpetuating the social ideals of immobility or sedentariness, this body of scholarship has facilitated exploration of the inherent fluidity in contemporary global processes (Sheller & Urry 2006; Urry 2007; Cresswell & Merriman 2011). In this sense, geographically defined categories have shown their limits, such that a broader understanding of the “situated politics of belonging” (Yuval-Davis, Viethen & Kannabiran 2006) is now common sense.

Expanding on this paradigm shift, on the other hand, recent publications have initiated a critical re-evaluation of an exclusive focus on mobility (Ortar, Salzbrunn & Stock 2018; Glick Schiller & Çağlar 2011; Schmoll 2020), recognizing the risk of obscuring inequalities in accessing mobility and the various downsides associated with the logics of circulation. Moreover, these critiques

shed light on how immobility and barriers to movement are integral components of many life paths (Timera 2009). In-depth examinations of migration trajectories in particular have brought to light the intricate interplay of inequalities and complex tensions between obstacles and circulation that significantly impact issues of mobility, citizenship and belonging in the contemporary world (Agier 2002; Agier 2013; Agier & Lecadet 2014; Vertovec 2010).

In recent decades, these approaches have been invigorated by a growing interest in artistic practices, with music and dance emerging as particularly illuminating avenues for rethinking transnational and mobility-centered approaches to migration studies (Capone & Salzbrunn 2018; Aterianus-Owanga, Djebbari & Salzbrunn 2019; Andrieu & Rinaudo 2023; Sievers 2024). These creative expressions and their subsequent circulation are not solely influenced by the rise of transnational relationships and networks, but also actively contribute to the formation of global and interconnected local imaginaries and “ways of life” (Wulff 1998, 2007; Bohlman 2002).

Scholars focusing on artists’ trajectories and biographies have underscored the agency of migrants and minorities, challenging previous perceptions that portrayed them as subjects confined by institutional borders or as a homogeneous group of victims (Martiniello, Puig, & Suzanne 2009). More recently, the emancipatory power of music within the context of forced migration has been recognized, particularly among young refugees (Laborde 2023; Sarroy & Kyratsou forthcoming). Finally, analyses of artists’ careers have demonstrated the impact of migration policies on professional achievements (Le Menestrel 2012), as well as how artistic practices provide individuals with access to new social positions, reshuffling local and global hierarchies (Neveu Kringelbach 2013; Sorignet 2010). This research has addressed a gap in migration and diversity studies by highlighting the ways in which artists navigate, divert, and subvert the power regimes to which they are subjected (Derderian 2024). Hence, the pres-

ent special issue about research on music and dance makes significant contributions to the field of the autonomy of migration. Alternative imaginaries of borders (Metcalfe 2022) can be expressed through dance and music practices, and obstacles can be overcome symbolically, although there are still persistent juridical and physical frontiers (Hess 2017). Nevertheless, the focus on migrants' agency through their creativity, artistic practices and trajectories contributes a great deal to renewing the perspective on the autonomy of migration.

On a more interpersonal and intersubjective level, the surge in artists' mobility has given rise to the interweaving of new intimacies and "passionate encounters" (Davis 2015) revolving around the music and dance practices that transcend national borders. The proliferation of courses dedicated to "exotic" dance forms in Western national contexts since the 1990s (Apprill, Djakouane & Nicolas-Daniel 2013) has contributed notably to the emergence of new forms of tourism centered on the practice of diverse dances in various locations (Menet 2020; Aterianus-Owanga 2018). This in turn has created professional and mobility opportunities for artists. Although such encounters are inevitably marked by economic and socio-political inequalities, scholars have also shed light on the criticality and agencies that emerge when individuals confront the "Other," thereby emphasizing the role of artistic conventions in shaping these encounters (Aterianus-Owanga 2021).

These perspectives have facilitated the re-evaluation of dominant discourses and dichotomies, emphasizing the importance of specific methodological approaches. On the one hand, studies of transnational and translocal collaborations and funding have revealed new hierarchies, asymmetries, and power relations influenced by various forms of mobility and immobility. For instance, Altaïr Despres (2016) combines an analysis of historical and (post)colonial relationships between France and African countries with an examination of artists' trajectories, challenging representations of cultural globalization as a

movement from a centre to peripheries or as a process of deterritorialization. Instead, Despres illuminates how the links that people and institutions forge in a specific socio-historical context shape the emergence of determined art forms in certain locations. Similarly, by incorporating the analysis of the aesthetic content of artworks into research methods, other inquiries have redefined discussions surrounding hegemony and cultural appropriation (Andrieu 2014; Slitine 2018). Through analysis of the logics that underlie creative processes, authors reveal the constant exchanges and inspirations that shape creation. This recentres the debates on individual and collective agencies and values, shifting the focus away from aesthetic impositions or plundering.

These viewpoints emphasize that cultural exchanges and circulations are nuanced and resist oversimplification into stereotypical relations between the privileged and the underprivileged or between the "North" and the "South" (Neveu Kringelbach & Skinner 2012). Although in some cases the traditional opposition between agency-oriented and structuralist views remains evident in the analysis of art worlds (Aterianus-Owanga, Gaulier & Navarro 2022), a prevailing approach should involve a combination of situated ethnographic research perspectives with a thorough analysis of contextual inequalities and historical frames. In essence, these perspectives, with their emphasis on agents or cultural brokers in a translocal perspective, have illuminated practices that, while shaped by the movements and interactions of agents beyond national borders, rely on these agents' capacity to navigate structures of opportunity in a specific locality. This involves adapting to the material, social, and political conditions in place and establishing both symbolic and material roots in that space (Capone & Salzbrunn 2018: 12).

The papers featured in this special issue build upon and further contribute to these emerging reflections by delving into three key dimensions of migration and diversity studies that are rejuvenated through research on music and dance:

ethical and epistemological inquiries; considerations of asymmetries and power relations; and lastly, methodological considerations. Recognizing the richness that diverse perspectives on migrating through the arts can bring to these topics, the guest editors assembled contributors with backgrounds in ethnomusicology, anthropology, sociology, and dance studies, fostering an interdisciplinary dialogue. The geographical scope covered by the contributors extends from South and North America to Europe, Africa, and SWANA (Southwest Asia and North Africa).

Epistemological and ethical questions

The first series of articles deals with **epistemological and ethical questions**. Research in ethnic and migration studies invariably raises questions about the (mis)representation and understanding of the “Other” and prompts reflection on the role researchers play in constructing and challenging such representations. By taking a we-versus-them perspective based on national belonging, nation-based groups are implicitly supposed to be homogenous. Nina Glick Schiller and Ayse Çağlar (2011), like others, have criticized this methodological nationalism. Constructive theoretical approaches focusing on diversity (Salzbrunn 2013; 2014), super-diversity (Vertovec 2010) and belonging (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2012) have contributed a great deal to opening up non-essentializing epistemological perspectives. In the context of the globalization of references and practices, these questions extend further as shared practices and multiple belongings (Yuval-Davis, Viethen & Kannabiran 2006) proliferate worldwide, challenging the very notion of otherness and emphasizing processes of differentiation and identification. The first section of this special issue delves into these issues through three essays that are focused on music practices, their (meta-)analysis, and their role in nurturing new forms of belonging. Authored by scholars with backgrounds in ethnomusicology and anthropology, these essays offer a thoughtful exploration of music in the context of migration experiences, (perceived and constructed)

social and cultural difference and diversity, and globalized cultural forms.

In his article **A Radical Concern: Advocacy for an Ingenious Anthropology**, Denis Laborde addresses a fundamental concern regarding the inability of the social sciences to counteract the resurgence of the walls that the previous generation worked so hard to dismantle. Focused on ethnomusicology, or the anthropology of music, the author explores this concern in four steps. First, the article examines the position of ethnomusicology within the social sciences, particularly within the realm of the musical anthropology of migrations. Second, it delves into ethnographic inquiry as an art of diversion, an instrument that sharpens observational accuracy and serves as an engine of indignation, allowing the strategies and tactics used by actors to navigate social categories to be deciphered. Third, the temporal inscription of artistic performances is explored in order to understand the complexities of the narratives surrounding migration. Lastly, the article addresses the “categorical service” provided by ethnomusicology’s conceptual frameworks, emphasizing the importance of challenging these frameworks and investigating the question of indexicality. Laborde argues that, by taking indirect paths, understanding the timing of musical actions, and recognizing context without reifying it, we make our observations more complex, avoiding fixed perspectives and resisting the temptation to oversimplify social interactions. The goal is to reveal the overlooked aspects and foster an ethnomusicological science that discovers the hidden instead of creating explanatory models.

In his exploration of **Migrancy and Music in Film**, Martin Stokes challenges the complexities in the field of migrant music studies, which has been labelled by some as “unmappable” due to the ethical and practical demands on researchers. The focus is on questioning the processes of categorization that are related to music and dance in the context of migration. Examining films from commercial cinema, academic ethnography, and contemporary curatorial culture,

the paper depicts complex struggles over time, history, and the skills that migrant musicians bring to such struggles. Simultaneously, it questions the conventional narrative frameworks that are used to represent migrant and refugee musicians. Do we consider music as music and dance as dance when it comes to migration? Through the lens of Bal's migratory aesthetics, Stokes argues that music and sound shed light on the materiality and stickiness of time while offering a critical perspective. He also suggests that the study of music and sound can be more effectively harnessed to understand contemporary perspectives on "new diversities."

In her article **Art Worlds in Situation: Old Methods for a (New) Anthropology of Popular Music and Dance in Migration**, Alice Aterianus-Owanga builds on recent anthropological studies on the activities and networks of "ordinary" migrant artists in migration, including her own ethnography of Senegalese dancers' migrations to Europe, to revisit old ethnographic methods through insights from migration studies. The paper builds on recent paradigm shifts that have characterized the anthropology of migration in the last decades, such as theories of transnationalism, critiques of methodological nationalism, and notions of diasporic citizenship and translocality. It combines these perspectives with methods associated with the analysis of social networks, "social situations," and "social worlds" or "art worlds." These methods, inspired by sociologists of the Chicago school and anthropologists of the Manchester school, facilitate a nuanced understanding of transnational connections and creations in the realms of music and dance. By spotlighting collaborations, interactions, and circulations among diverse actors, places, networks, and values, this approach challenges traditional power structures within institutionalized music and dance worlds. Aterianus-Owanga suggests that conceptualizing art worlds and grounding the understanding of cultural meanings in everyday events and "generic moments" can transcend the limitations of the local/global dichotomy, providing a more nuanced perspec-

tive on the intricate social and cultural dynamics in migration contexts. The focus on music and dance in migration therefore offers valuable insights into enduring epistemological and methodological debates.

Asymmetries and Power Relations

Linked to the initial exploration of epistemological questions, the second section delves into the realm of **asymmetries and power relations**. In the context of migration experiences and post-migrant societies, as well as in research on these subjects, hierarchies are manifested in different forms. These pertain first to the downgrading and precarious conditions experienced by migrants and minorities, but they also extend to the dynamics between researchers and the subjects of their studies. Recent analyses have also scrutinized hierarchies concerning access to mobility, visibility, and recognition within art worlds (Fraser 2000; Aterianus-Owanga, Djebbari and Salzbrunn 2019; Andrieu and Rinaudo 2023). This work has focused on the role of brokers in a broad network of artists and producers, as well as on intermediaries who have powerful positions in cultural centres to shed light on the unequal access to resources and the continuous asymmetries and power relations that permeate the networks of artists and producers. Speaking to these issues, the pieces by Neveu Kringelbach, Navarro, and Rinaudo critically examine how mobilities and immobilities, along with the perceptions and representations of such experiences, influence power dynamics, artistic career opportunities, and the attainment of recognition. The exploration encompasses fundamental concepts within the realm of music and dance research, such as the notion of "scene," and investigates the intricate interplay between local contexts and mobility.

In her article **The Art of Navigating Interrupted Mobilities: West African Performers and the Challenges of Temporality**, H el ene Neveu Kringelbach critically examines the asymmetries arising from growing impediments to physical circulation within transnational cultural spaces.

The focus is on the impact of migration regimes in the Global North on West African performers, examining both their on-stage and off-stage experiences, and prompting a reevaluation of the temporal dimensions within migration studies. Based on her ongoing research with West African dancers and choreographers, Neveu Kringelbach analyses the tactics employed by these artists to navigate a world that values their work while often excluding their physical presence. These tactics, extending beyond the domain of performance, provide a glimpse into how artists conceptualize and anticipate alternative futures. Addressing what the author terms “interrupted mobility,” choreographic artists adopt diverse strategies. The article offers selected examples, such as a focus on solo and duo performances for easier travel, the development of modular “mobile” pieces adaptable to different contexts, the creation of works directly addressing immobility, and the establishment of arts centres in home countries as a distinctive form of return. These forms of return challenge instrumentalizing narratives and show that the strategies employed by choreographic artists go beyond mere responses to migration challenges. A comprehensive exploration of the long-term journeys of African choreographic artists reveals that their mobility strategies transcend migration concerns, encompassing the broader themes of maturing as artists and social adults within transnational communities, and ultimately crafting lives worth living. The article emphasizes the significance of sustained engagement with artists in the region to deconstruct conventional narratives about dance and music in Africa. Neveu Kringelbach’s research resonates with Cécile Navarro’s analysis of the (im)mobilities experienced by Senegalese rap singers.

In **Power Asymmetries on the Senegalese Rap Scene: Migrants, Mobiles and Immobiles**, Cécile Navarro highlights the growing inequalities in accessing (physical) mobility and various ways of handling these constraints. While mobility and migration have been widely acknowledged for highlighting power imbalances, revealing that

certain individuals enjoy freedom of movement, while others face restrictions due to unequal access to political, financial, cultural, and social resources (Kofman 2005), the concrete power mechanisms underlying these inequalities have received less scrutiny. The article draws on the findings of an ethnographic study conducted among rap artists, producers, and cultural entrepreneurs in Senegal, and seeks to delve into the categories of Migrants, Mobiles, and Immobiles as they emerge within the framework of a “music scene.” Through the lens of the “music scene,” Navarro investigates how music is conceptualized as the product of a specific locale while simultaneously envisioning diverse mobilities. This exploration unveils the intricate dynamics between locality and mobility, shedding light on the establishment of hierarchies of places. By examining the Senegalese rap scene, Navarro discerns the ways in which power asymmetries are manifested and negotiated within the music production landscape. The article thus contributes to a nuanced understanding of the multifaceted interactions between mobility, music, and power, emphasizing the need to move beyond a simplistic characterization of mobility constraints to recognize the complex interplay of factors that shape the experiences of Migrants, Mobiles, and Immobiles in the Senegalese rap scene.

Christian Rinaudo’s article, **Interconnected Scenes: Towards a Critical Approach of Mobility, Agency, Territory and Ethnicity**, provides a critical examination of three key issues within the realm of art and migration as addressed by social science research. It scrutinizes the interrelation between various mobility systems (migration, tourism, professional travel, and artistic tours) and diverse subject positions (artist, migrant, tourist, etc.). Furthermore, it explores the significance of territories and forms of local and transnational anchoring within interconnected practices and scenes. Lastly, the article investigates the notions of identity and alterity developed by artists in response to their migration experiences. Adopting an anthropological lens, the theoretical framework sees music as a

vital element for understanding how local and national identities are forged, revealing the intricate interweaving of racial, classist, regional, and sexual ideologies. The methodological approach draws on ethnomusicology, centring on “popular” music and examining its history and transformations within the broader context of local and (trans)national interconnections. Rinaudo supports these theoretical concepts with insights from personal research conducted in Europe and Latin America, supplemented by empirical contributions from other authors. The article underscores the pivotal role of empirical research in challenging assumptions about migrant exceptionalism and advocates relational approaches. It urges a reconsideration of the mobility paradigm, acknowledging artists’ experiences of territorial assignment, discrimination, and engagement with bureaucratic border regimes. Ultimately, the paper encourages a nuanced understanding of migration as situated between mobility and motility, freedom and constraint, autonomy and heteronomy, agency and dispossession.

Methodological approaches

The third and final section of the special issue addresses methodological approaches in the study of migration and artistic practices, specifically within the realm of dance performances. Innovative sensory and biographical methodological approaches, together with theoretical frameworks oriented towards the agency and autonomy of migration, enable the capture of intricate social realities, offering a distinct perspective on phenomena. The contributors to this section have backgrounds in sociology and dance research. They chart new and original pathways for research designs by centring on dance, as opposed to traditional focuses on ethnic or migrant groups and their collective identities. These approaches suggest delving into embodied and affective experiences to comprehensively grasp the dynamics of mobility and circulation. Alternatively, the authors advocate concentrating on a singular place to underscore

its profound impact on the broader global dance scene.

In her article **Through the Lens of Salsa: Im/Mobile Careers in Transnational Dance Worlds**, **Joanna Menet** contributes to theoretical and methodological reflections on the study of dance worlds. Building on her personal ethnographic research with salsa dancers, the author introduces the concept of im/mobile careers to elucidate how global inequalities impact dance professionals. Emphasizing variations in accessing resources such as mobility, the paper also underscores the significance of gendered roles and racialized representations in dance practices. Furthermore, against the narrative of the salsa circuit as a paradigmatic space of diversity and inclusiveness, the paper argues that a closer examination unveils nuanced power dynamics that contradict the assumption of inclusiveness. Through an exploration of the careers of three dance professionals, the paper ultimately demonstrates the utility of examining a diverse range of actors to move beyond static categories. The study extends its exploration beyond the confines of the dance floor, providing insights into how categories of difference and expressions of belonging are negotiated throughout the development of dance careers. This expanded biographical perspective not only reveals the intricacies of the salsa dance circuit, it also brings to light connections and frictions that would otherwise remain hidden. By elucidating the entanglements and barriers shaping movement, Menet’s approach finally offers nuanced insights into the lives of individuals who are less studied within the salsa dance circuit.

Marion Fournier’s article, **Wuppertal: Becoming a *Haut Lieu* and Symbolic Space of Dance through Diversity**, describes the position of Wuppertal in Germany as a significant dance hub shaped by the work of Pina Bausch. The article explores the intricate interplay of the symbolic and institutional layers that contribute to Wuppertal’s status as a *haut lieu*. The city’s centrality is contextualized within the dynamic mobility of its dancers and the diverse human flows

generated by its audiences and performers. The emotional resonance bestowed upon the Lichtburg studio is examined in the context of the dancers' migration trajectories. Local institutions exert translocal and transnational influences, while theatres become memory spaces, transforming dancers of various national backgrounds into "cousins from Wuppertal." This *haut lieu*, distinct from conventional world dance capitals, acquires symbolic power through Pina Bausch's globally renowned *œuvre*. Wuppertal's centrality is therefore not isolated but becomes manifest through spatial strategies, tours, key locations, and constant movement between artistic hubs and the city itself. The symbolic dimension of the *haut lieu* and of the creations developed within it are intertwined with dancers' migratory paths, which are crucial to the Bauschian artistic creation. In its works, the dance company serves as a narrative conduit for personal and collective migrations, performed in a highly specific theatre that adds another layer to the symbolic tapestry of Wuppertal.

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