



# WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY DANCE

( IN SERBIA )



**DANCE** is a movement,  
it happens within and outside the body,  
it may also exist without visible movements.

**Dance is a personal issue,**  
because everyone can experience a certain manner of  
movement as dance...  
Or maybe not.

## CONTEMPORARY DANCE

*is an art practice within the wider framework of performing arts. Historically, it is based on, and continues the art practices of body movement developed in ballet and in modern and modernist dance, the practices that are questioned, problematized or disputed and abandoned while facing other artistic, cultural, social and discursive practices.*

If we try to historically locate the exact period when contemporary dance occurred in the international (West European and North American) art scene, we could start from the 1960s, when a specific artistic paradigm was established – contemporary art. *The initial standpoint in the contemporary artistic creation is the divergence from seeing, experiencing and creating a work of art as a complete, finished material artefact/product. On the contrary, contemporary artistic creation is*

rather oriented towards the direct effect of a work of art itself within the public sphere, whereby the artist is often engaged. Thus the work of art **questions, examines, tries, explores, discusses, problematizes and criticises various social issues.** In the domain of dance as a specific art practice and medium, such turn has predominantly manifested itself through the abandonment of (one) dance technique, style, form, codification of gesture/movement, and so forth. For the very reason of not being defined by a single normative form, contemporary dance has created a possibility of different ways in exploration and expression. Therefore, when observing a contemporary dance performance, we can see dancers performing most diverse movements, dance techniques, speaking, doing something or not even moving at all. These performances abandon the dominant correlation between narrative, music and movement, and turn to more open and spontaneous relations between these elements in the performance. Simultaneously, body practices and body movement practices are being induced, whereby already normalized ideas and concepts of dance are problematized and questioned.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Short summary and definition quotes by theoretician Ana Vujanović from the “Contemporary Dance Scene”, in: Šuvaković, Miško, *Art History in Serbia XX Century 1*, Belgrade: Orion Art, 2010

## CHOREOGRAPHY

The first version of the word *choreography* dates from 1588/89 and can be found in *Orchesographie*, a manual assembled by a Jesuit priest Thoinot Arbeau in France, originating from the amalgamation of two words meaning (circular) dance – *choreia*, and writing – *graphy*. Choreography connects the one who dances with the one who writes it down. Thus framed, choreography could also be understood as the process of writing the dance and the organization of its structure and composition, so the dancer could implement and repeat it.

In the US, the term first appeared in the American English Dictionary in the 1950s, whereas the word *choreographer* was first used in 1936 to denominate the work of George Balanchine on the Broadway show *On Your Toes*.

## PHILOSOPHY OF CHOREOGRAPHY

*We can say that choreography is thinking about the circular or linear organisation and/or displacement of the moving relations between objects and subjects in time and space on stage, which are also dealing with the tangible and intangible movement relations between the performance and/or performers and the auditorium or spectators.*

*But still, all this does not cover the term, nor the way choreography has been practised as in principle. A choreographer does not organise time and space of what happens on stage but mainly of what happens in the minds of the beholders, the spectators. It is there where the choreography takes place and happens, but this is not specific to choreography. All arts finally try to trigger the mind of the spectators, but not all trigger movement relations in the mind of the spectator. And then about this "thinking" in the definition, this "thinking" is the most important task of a choreographer. S(h)e thinks about movement, about the many ways movement manifests itself and (s)he thinks about what the motional aspects sh(e) uses trigger in the spectator.<sup>2</sup>*

*Every work of dance has a **concept**, because it is **founded on a conceptual order of ideas, beliefs, values, procedures and meanings** even when they are generated by intuition. However, starting from the 90s, concepts are being thematically organized, and discussed for every choreographic work of the new practices. So it was no longer understood that the choreographer - her style, language, technique, represented themes - is sufficient to stand for her object dance with her concept of it. In other words, choreographers don't treat the choreography as a self-evident notion any more, nor as a concept that is closed. A closed concept defines choreography as a composition, and identifies composition with inscribing a form or structure, but in any case a notion of a whole, by bodily movement in time and space. Such concept of choreography rests on an agreement and a hierarchical apparatus of production (choreographer transferring knowledge to dancers by show-copy model or material moulding).*

<sup>2</sup> Jan Ritsema, Questionnaire on Choreography - 100 Definitions, www.corpusweb.net

*The choreographers in the 90s contested the idea that choreography is the writing that follows, resembles, represents the speech of dance, like the written following the spoken word. They insisted on the separation between dancing and choreographing, so that writing may precede dancing. Writing isn't only language for action, movement, thought, reflection, consciousness, unconsciousness, experience and affectivity; it is all that, but also the totality of what makes it possible. In other words, it can include a deconstruction of the assumptions, rules and values which guide writing.*

*To claim that choreography is an open concept implies that the notion of choreography (composition) can be expanded and modified. Choreographic practices start using other tools than the so-called immanent. The **new tools choreographers use are: language and theory, history and historicity, sign communication, visual arts, and secondary effects of other media like film, music, digital medium, as well as the concept of the theatre dispositif in relation to popular culture.**<sup>3</sup>*

## OR, TO PUT IT DIFFERENTLY...

If we wish to do so, we can notice choreography in the street, in the arrangement of traffic lights' duration, in the movement of people through public transport, in the typing of the author of this text on the computer keyboard, in the observation of conversations, in a basketball game or anything else, or as a framed work in a performing space. The manner and dynamics of movement, the pauses, costumes, music and lighting enhance the impression that choreography makes on us. So, **when a choreographer contemplates about choreography, he/she actually contemplates what it could produce in the spectator's mind.**

<sup>3</sup> Xavier Le Roy, Bojana Cvejić, Gerald Siegmund, "To end with judgment by way of clarification," in: Martina Hochmuth, Krassimira Kruschkova, Georg Schöllhammer eds, *It takes place when it doesn't: On dance and performance since 1999*, Frankfurt: Revolver, 2006, pgs. 49-56

## THE STANCE OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE TOWARDS SOCIAL PHENOMENA, CHANGES, AND OTHER ARTS

Dance is sometimes beautiful  
Some dances are beautiful  
Dance is not necessarily beautiful  
Dance itself is necessary

**The aesthetic (sensory, beautiful) is not the only criterion, nor a legitimate manner to value (dance) art** as a specific and relatively autonomous form of creation. There are also other criteria, such as the political, critical, technical, pornographic, psychoanalytical, ethical, economical, feminist, etc. **The artist is the intervening social subject and the function of his/her creation is not only to express themselves (their depth, essence), but also to influence the value, ideological and other dominant systems they recognize within the context of their creation, i.e. the context of their intervention.**<sup>4</sup> The author/artist bears responsibility for every work of art, and also for a dance work of art, although they cannot entirely control how such work will function in public.

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<sup>4</sup> Study group "Terms" (*Termini*) within the Deschooling Classroom (o^o) project (*Raškolovano znanje* (o^o): (in alphabetical order) Milena Bogavac, Dragana Bulut, Bojan Đorđev, Anđela Ćirović, Siniša Ilić, Milan Marković, Katarina Popović, Ljiljana Tasić, <http://www.antijargon.tkh-generator.net/2010/12/04/kontekstualna/?lang=sr>

## **OBSERVING A CONTEMPORARY DANCE PERFORMANCE**

### **DO IT WITH AN OPEN MIND**

A contemporary dance performance may seem vague and non-dance-like. It looks this way if the viewer comes to observe it with a preconception arising from the experience of a certain dance and what it may be, as a desire for a certain experience the dance would cause.

Should one have a rare opportunity to encounter contemporary dance in their environment, their knowledge and experience of such dance are formed according to previous experience with dance performances they had the opportunity to gain. So, the viewer may only be educated if they have the opportunity to experience such artistic work somewhere.

If we take into consideration the fact that one of the aims of contemporary dance art is to explore the phenomena within the social and artistic context of the artist's creation, then we must accept the fact that these aims shall also be subjected by the medium used by the art, which in this case are dance and choreography.

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## ACCEPT

What we observe while watching a dance performance is the rounding off of the artistic process on the level of content, form, concept, performativity and methodology as well as the viewing of the artwork in its entirety (all elements of the performance – from physical materials to music, costumes, light – and their mutual relations). As such, the work of art corresponds to the context in which it is created or shown (analyzes it, criticizes, questions, judges, accepts, and so forth).

Everything begins with an idea. Ideas are articulated through the process and shown in various ways. Sometimes it is only the atmosphere to which we as the audience are exposed, whereas sometimes the dancers verbally or non-verbally express themselves on a certain subject.

Accepting does not mean agreeing with the artist – many critics, artists, connoisseurs of dance often disagree on their views of certain creative solutions. Accepting would mean giving a chance to what the artist has to offer.

By opening a work of art to a multitude of readings, instead of relating it only to the reading of one subject/author, these practices ask who are the viewers with whom the artists communicate during the performance. They indicate that **the aim of the artist** should be **to create a “communicational community”** with the viewer during the performance as a “sustainable basis of communication, which is not something that already exists”. The creation of a “communication community” in a performance requires directing the communication between the artist, the performance, and the audience to the issues that may concern them all and thus “convince” them to become a part of such temporary community.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Vujanović Ana, *Performance and/as (Mis)communicational community*, master seminar, Universidad de Arte Reina Sofia, Madrid 2010, Belgrade: TKH No. 12, 2006/07

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## LETTING GO OF THE ALREADY SEEN

Contemporary dance performances differ from each other. Even if we compare two performances of the same choreographer/author, they may consist of entirely different themes, aesthetics, or dynamics. In some performances virtuosity dominates, in some the entire ensemble takes part, while some are dedicated to exploration and they include the audience or the dancers not dancing, but only speaking. The reason for this arises particularly from exploration and questioning of the very theatrical apparatus, the role of the viewers, the principle of authorship and the method of production in dance and choreography, as well as the relations between the art market and the exchange economy, the principles behind production and knowledge distribution in dance, the cooperation and networking of artists as individual authors and artists at institutions, and also the influence and interventionism within the very specific context of its origin. It expects our involvement and alertness as audience.

Therefore, every performance of contemporary dance is a surprise and a challenge.

## CONTEMPORARY DANCE IN SERBIA

Contemporary dance is a young art domain in our environment, whose development is yet to be worked on extensively. During the past fifteen years or so, many initiatives have appeared to come from artists themselves as an expression of their desire and need to induce their field of work into the courses of culture within their environment, to organize the working conditions, and maintain continuous communication with the audience and with other professionals from similar or different fields of art.

At the same time, from the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, contemporary dance has been viewed in Europe as the field of the greatest dynamics, change and influence compared to all other fields of contemporary art. This is partly caused by the fact that this field is young and that much of it is still open, but also by another fact – that it is recognised as the domain of articulated and educated critical thinking of reality and of a self-critical relation to oneself. In great part, the works produced in this field tackle immediate reality with all its changes and with the effects of these changes on the very field of dance and the position of dance artists. That is why cultural authorities of all European countries initialised a systemic support and contribution to the development of this field, finding in it



**innovative models of work, organisation, cooperation, connection, transdisciplinary transformation and progressive thinking on cultural policies.** New institutions have been founded across Europe, public, private, independent and non-profit, that contributed to the growth of dance communities. This was all followed by the creation of new education projects, at universities or as new autonomous institutions, which became the breeding ground for artists engaged in dance and choreography, and not only in these countries, but all around the world.

In our case, due to the very lack of systemic support, at the beginning of 2000s young artists and experts have started leaving Serbia for schooling at all these various schools - in Berlin, Brussels, Amsterdam, and so forth. This has made a double impact on our dance scene: on one hand, it was weakened by the continuous “drain” of people who have developed their capacities abroad and contributed to those scenes with their creative and engaged work; on the other hand, in a vast number of cases it enabled the **connection between the local art community with other scenes and cultural environments.**

Today, all these complex processes must be examined critically and analytically through an intensive group dialogue that would enable all of us working here to articulate what should be worked on in the future.

## THE TIMELINE OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE IN SERBIA

*Although the development of contemporary dance in Serbia gained particular impetus as late as the beginning of the 2000s, and although it is usually considered a direct “import” from the Western international scene, the local history of (contemporary) dance existed as a side, fragmentary, discontinual and non-teleological network of former traces of different cultural and artistic practices of body movement. The local history does not lead down a straight line to contemporary dance in Serbia and differs from the dance history in Western Europe and the USA. Before and after World War II, within the framework of local history of dance, in addition to ballet, **dance and body practices preceding the appearance of contemporary dance include:***

— **The emancipation of body through a modern dance compound of gymnastics, plastic, rhythmic and physical culture** (school of Maga Magazinović, the Belgrade contemporary ballet of Smiljana Mandukić, Dance studio of Dubravka Maletić, wherefrom artists and companies further arise);

### – Sportive and cultural body practices of the Sokol

movement members, a Pan-Slavic movement focused on the health of the collective body (the Sokol rally transformed into the official form of cultural representation of the body, so it became a rally that celebrates Youth Day).

**New tendencies of the art scene** *of the 60s and the 70s across the former Yugoslavia introduce the body problematics into art in a significant manner:*

– *Performance art, happening, and body art (for example, the works of Marina Abramović);*

– *Neo avant-garde theatre and theatrical happening (“Hair”, a hippie musical in Atelier 212, directed by Mira Trailović), verbo-voco-visual works of Katalin Ladik, theatrical happenings surrounding the Grandstand of Youth (Tribina mladih) in Novi Sad.*

*Here we do not speak of dance as a branch of art, but of **dance “piercing through” other art forms.** These artistic practices have thoroughly contemplated the status of the body in art, and as main influences on dance they leave the thinking of the body as an object or medium of art and thinking about the artist’s body as the subject of art.*

*The nucleus of dance in a present-day sense is linked to postmodernism: dance as a means or medium of expression within the framework of postmodern theatre (as broadly understood; also encompasses dance theatre and choreodrama).*

**During the 90s, dance has predominantly been developing within the framework of alternative theatre.** *Hybrid forms of theatre are practiced, bringing them closer to, and interlacing them with dance: non-verbal, physical and movement theatre, dance theatre, so as numerous other forms of experimental theatre and performance – independent theatre companies.<sup>6</sup>*

<sup>6</sup> Short summary and definition quotes by the theoretician Ana Vujanović from the “Contemporary Dance Scene”, in: Šuvaković, Miško, *Art History in Serbia XX Century 1*, Belgrade: Orion Art, 2010.

## HISTORICAL TIMELINE

Here follows a proposed historical timeline of the development throughout the modern, postmodern, and contemporary local dance scene in the period between 1909 and 2017. This timeline was made with an idea to represent the continuum of the significant events reviewed from the perspective of those who are tackling the field of contemporary dance in Serbia today. It does not encompass all past events. There are many other parallel lines and unmarked “dots” that are probably far more important in someone’s personal development than these. If this timeline omits someone or something, please note that it was done unintentionally.

Guided by the idea that a line consists of an infinite number of dots, the authors of this timeline are offering an invitation, not determination.

Feel free to fill in what is missing. Thank you!

(MAGA MAGAZINOVIĆ)

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1909

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**MARIJA MAGA MAGAZINOVIĆ** (1882 - 1968), journalist, writer, choreographer, dance teacher, and a feminist, went to Munich with the intention to obtain a PhD degree, but then became interested in dance and started attending dance and drama courses at the school led by Elizabeth Duncan and Max Reinhardt.

1910

After returning to Belgrade, Maga Magazinović founded a school for rhythmic gymnastics, later called the **SCHOOL OF RHYTHM AND PLASTICS**.

**1928**

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**SMILJANA MANDUKIĆ** (1908-1992), dance teacher, choreographer, and founder of the first ensemble of modern dance in Belgrade, created the first modern dance performance in Belgrade, at the National Theater, after returning from Vienna where she had studied ballet and modern dance.

**1930**

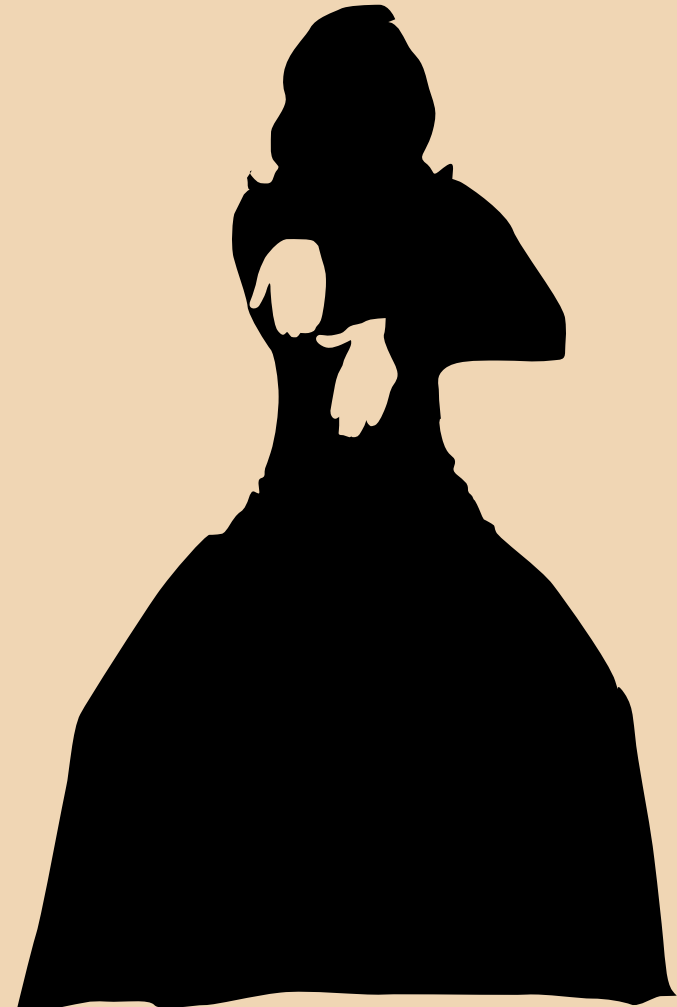
Smiljana Mandukić wrote “The Body Language: Experience of Modern Ballet”, one of the first books published in Serbia about modern dance.

**1939**

**MILENA POPOVIĆ ČUTUKOVIĆ**, ballet artist and dance teacher, returned to Novi Sad, where she brought her knowledge and dancing experience gained at the Laban Centre for Movement.

**(SMILJANA MANDUKIĆ)**

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## 1947

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**THE BALLET SCHOOL “LUJO DAVIČO”** was founded in Belgrade; founder and directress was **ANI RADOŠEVIĆ**, a ballet dancer, choreographer, and an opera director.

### 1948

The Ballet School in Novi Sad was founded, first director was **MARGITA DEBELJAK** (who studied at Laban Centre for Movement) and Milena Popović Čutuković (studied with M. Froman at Laban Centre for Movement in Essen).

### 1951

*Prosveta* publishes the book “History of Dance” by Marija Maga Magazinović; she taught history of dance (among other subjects) at the newly founded Ballet School “Lujó Davičo” in Belgrade.

### 1955

**MILICA ZAJCEV**, our most famous ballet critic, and later on a modern and contemporary dance critic, started working.

## 1960

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**BOJAN STUPICA** hired eight selected female dancers, who studied in the group of Smiljana Mandukić by her system of modern dance, for the Atelje 212 ballet ensemble. They performed under the title “Contemporary Ballet” at the Chamber Theater scene of Atelje 212; during the theater season they did 22 performances in this theater space.

### 1962

The Association of Ballet Artists of Serbia - **UBUS** was founded, at the initiative of **KATARINA OBRADOVIĆ, JOVANKA BJEGOJEVIĆ, MILICA JOVANOVIĆ, MIRA SANJINA, TEMIR POKORNI, BRANKO MARKOVIĆ, SVETOZAR DOBROVOLJAC, STEVAN ŽUNAC, BORIS RADAK AND DRAGIŠA ĐULIĆ**, at that time active ballet artists. Mira Sanjina was elected as the president. The association consisted of ballet artists from the National Theater in Belgrade, the Contemporary Theater in Belgrade (today Belgrade Drama Theater) and the National Theater in Novi Sad. Today, UBUS is the only representative association in the field of ballet and contemporary dance according to the Law on Culture. UBUS advocates solving problems of retirement of ballet artists, issues of copyright and interpretation rights, issues of payment of contributions and health insurance to independent artists, enrolling various legal solutions for improving the status of artists in general, determining their status and keeping records of independent artists.

### 1963

**DIMITRIJE PARLIĆ** choreographed “Miraculous Mandarin”, a ballet composed by Bela Bartok, considered as an example of bringing together classical and neoclassical ballet of that time. In the local ballet community this is considered as the starting point of modern approaches in the field of ballet. Tendencies of merging modern ideas in ballet works were later developed by choreographers such as **VLADIMIR LOGUNOV, ALEKSANDAR IZRAILOVSKI AND VERA KOSTIĆ**.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> „Orchestra“ Milica Zajcev, feuilleton 59-62

## 1967

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**BITEF FESTIVAL (BELGRADE INTERNATIONAL THEATER FESTIVAL)** was founded, at the initiative of **MIRA TRAILOVIĆ**, joined by **JOVAN ĆIRILOV** as an associate in artistic direction. In its history, the festival nurtured various theater forms and new phenomena in the context of performing arts, and consequently, a choreography and contemporary dance as well. So far, numerous domestic and international contemporary dance artists participated, such as Jan Fabre, Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker, Sussane Linke, Caroline Carlson, Lusinda Childs, Pina Bausch, Merce Cunningham, Sasha Waltz, Maurice Bejart, Constance Macrae, Meg Stuart, Wim Vandekeybus, Sidi Larbi, Lloyd Newson - DV8 Physical Theater, Nada Kokotović, Matija Ferlin, Sonja Vukićević, Dalija Aćin Thelander, Boris Čakširan, Ivana Ašković, Saša Asentić, Ana Vujanović, Olivera Kovačević Crnjanski, Ana Dubljević, Igor Koruga, and others.

## 1969

Smiljana Mandukić founded her group **BELGRADE CONTEMPORARY BALLET SMILJANA MANDUKIĆ**, which grew out of the ballet department of the cultural ensemble "Abrašević". Long term members of the group important for the development of theater and dance arts in Serbia were: **DUBRAVKA MALETIĆ**, professor and choreographer, later the founder and leader of her studio, **KATARINA STOJKOV-SLIJEPČEVIĆ**, professor at the ballet school "Lujko Davičo" in Belgrade, choreographer **NELA ANTONOVIĆ**, founder of Mimart Theater, **VERA OBRADOVIĆ**, teacher, founder and choreographer of the Ballet XXI movement, teachers **ALEKSANDRA JELIĆ-JOJIĆ**, **VESNA MILANOVIĆ**, **OLGA VUČKOVIĆ**, and **SANJA KRSMANOVIĆ-TASIĆ**, founder of Bread Theater, longtime member of DAH Theater and initiator of the event and symposium "Days of Smiljana Mandukić" in 2017.

## 1971

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**NADA KOKOTOVIĆ**, choreographer and theater director active in Zagreb, Belgrade and Subotica, left the Chamber Dance Ensemble (founded by **MILANA BROŠ**) and the Croatian National Theater, and then created her choreographic debut on the music "Lied" by Ivo Malec.

## 1972

**KATALIN LADIK** realized the first dance performance in Novi Sad with artists and youngsters, and later developed the *Kod* group. Performances in the Novi Sad scene used voice, movement, dance and visual arts as the tools of expression. The field of performance art in the local context was the essence for the development of the current contemporary dance practices on the local scene.

## 1974

**MALO POZORJE** was founded as a festival organized by the Cultural Center of Novi Sad, which represented and promoted various forms of performing arts. Later INFANT festival developed from it.

## 1977

Nada Kokotović returned to Yugoslavia after working in the United States (at the New York City Ballet as an assistant to George Balanchine, and on Off Off Broadway production). As an assistant director and choreographer she established the first cooperation with **LJUBIŠA RISTIĆ**. She started working on choreodrama, and afterwards, on what she called "total theater". Kokotović and Ristić, together with the playwright Dušan Jovanović and actor Rade Šerbedžija, founded the **KPGT** Theater (KPGT standing for the word THEATER spoken in four Yugoslav languages made as an acronym from the first letters of these words), a former non-institutional theater group based in Zagreb, later active all around Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The first show that KPGT presented to the audience was the Liberation of Skopje by Dušan Jovanović (1978.). As the Yugoslavia collapsed, the interest for the KPGT project dropped, and the founders of the theater began to split apart. The KPGT project continued during the nineties in Subotica, and ended up in Belgrade, where it still operates today.



## 1980

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Nada Kokotović founded the **GODO FEST**, and opened it with her performance “Waiting for Godo” performed by four women.

**ANĐELIJA TODORVIĆ**, dancer, author and choreographer, finished ballet school “Lujo Davičo” in Belgrade. Since 1986 till 1993 she had been working in the ensemble of the Terazije theater, before and after this period she worked independently in Belgrade, in the non-institutional context.

### 1981

The first choreodrama of Nada Kokotović “Othello kills Janice” was performed at the National Theater in Belgrade; soloist was **IVANKA LUKATELI**, while **SONJA VUKIĆEVIĆ** and **PASHA MUSIĆ** also took part in the performance. Choreodrama in Yugoslavia was developed by **DAMIR ZLATAR FREY** (worked as a theater director and choreographer in Belgrade and Novi Sad), and later by Sonja Vukićević, whose artistic development was influenced by choreographers Vera Kostić, Nada Kokotović, Damir Zlatar Frey and **HARIS PAŠOVIĆ**, with whom she collaborated the longest.

### 1982

Teacher and ballet artist **LJILJANA MIŠIĆ** returned to Novi Sad after her education in the field of modern dance and tap-dance in New York. She worked as a ballet and dance teacher at the Novi Sad Ballet School and she influenced artists and pedagogues such as **TATJANA GRUJIĆ** and **GORDANA DEAN**, who would later establish the dance studio *Rebis* in Novi Sad.

### 1983

Vera Kostić, ballet artist and choreographer of the National Theater in Belgrade, created performance “Eclipses” performed by **SONJA VUKIĆEVIĆ**, **LIDIJA PILIPENKO**, and **SPOMENKA PANTELIĆ**. The performance was awarded by the audience at the 28th Bitef Festival, and it received a golden award at the Monodrama Festival and the Pantomime Festival in Zemun.

1984

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**MIMART THEATER** was founded by Nela Antonović, artistic leader and theater director. Mimart Theater has been working continuously over three decades and it still exists today. Nela Antonović, the founder and artistic director to date, explores the possibilities of shifting the boundaries of theater using the method of Mimart creative visualization. She was the author of 40 experimental projects, as well as over 400 performances.

Some of the performers who participated in the theater are:

**MARIJA MARIČIĆ, PREDRAG ĐURĐEVIĆ, ANA JOJIĆ, DRAGAN GRBIĆ, LJUBIŠA PEKOVIĆ, SANDRA PETROVIĆ, IGOR KARAKAS, VESNA STEFANOVIĆ, ALEKSANDAR LEKIĆ, OLJA BABIĆ, ZORANA PETROVIĆ, BORKO ČUPIĆ, SUZANA MIHAJLOVIĆ, SLAĐANA SPASOJEVIĆ, NENAD RADUJEVIĆ, ZORAN KARADŽIĆ, IVANA JOKSIMOVIĆ, MILENA ZDRAVKOVIĆ, ANA BASTAĆ, BRANISLAV JEREMIĆ, NIKOLA VRANIĆ, PREDRAG RADOVANČEVIĆ,** and others.

1985

**LJUBIŠA RISTIĆ AND NADA KOKOTOVIĆ** started managing the National Theater in Subotica.

1986

Nada Kokotović initiated **THE EMERGENCY EXIT FESTIVAL**, The Festival of Dance Theater and Choreodrama in Subotica. As artistic director, she made a selection of performances and dance groups from Yugoslavia and abroad. The festival existed until 1991.

After finishing education in the field of visual arts, theater and contemporary dance in France, **JOŽEF NAĐ**, director, choreographer and dancer from Kanjiža formed his group *JEL* Theater (*jel* which means *sign* in Hungarian) and he created his first performance, *Pekinška patka* (*Beijing Duck*), in The Bastille Theater in Paris. Today, Nađ performs and works mostly abroad. In Kanjiža there is the Regional Creative Studio Jožef Nađ, used by artists and organizations active in domestic and international performing and dance scene.

**SIGNUM THEATER** was founded at the initiative of ballet artist and choreographer **DEJAN PAJOVIĆ**. Signum existed until 1993, and it gathered artists from the independent dance scene, some of which were later initiators of new theater and dance groups.

(SONJA VUKIĆEVIĆ, MEDEA)

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## 1987

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In the production of Malo Pozorje in Novi Sad, the choreodrama **UROBOROS** was created; by Damir Zlatar Frey as the choreographer and director. Sonja Vukićević got the leading role. **JELENA JOVIĆ, ANĐELIJA TODOROVIĆ** and **TATJANA PAJEVIĆ** were also performers in the piece, and will soon have started their own initiatives in the independent dance scene, working as authors and performers.

**MOLIERE FEST** started at the initiative of Nada Kokotović in Belgrade.

## 1988

**YU FEST** was presented in fifteen Yugoslav cities, with new base in Budva and Kotor, and produced abundance of productions, co-productions, touring and performances, as well as astonishing mobility of cultural workers and their works within the SFRY.

### (MAY 25TH)

Sonja Vukićević danced a solo at the last rally for the Youth Day at the JNA Stadium (music: Ksenija Zečević, directed by Paolo Magelli, choreographed by Damir Zlatar Frey); Bolero that she performed was taken from the performance *Uroboros*.

## 1989

The same model of working at the Népszínház National Theater in Subotica (under the leadership of Nada Kokotović and Ljubiša Ristić) was applied in Serbian National Theater (SNP) in Novi Sad (which was put under compulsory administration by the City Assembly at the time) with the idea of creating a “bicameral theater system”.

The Chamber theater of music *The Mirror* was founded, led by musician **BORIS KOVAČ**. The group dealt with the relationship between music and dance. The participating artists were from the field of dance and ballet: **OLIVERA KOVAČEVIĆ CRNJANSKI, IVANA INĐIN, MILAN LAZIĆ, VALERIJA POPOVIĆ**, and choreographer **JASNA KNEZ**.

**BITEF THEATER** was founded in Belgrade. A large number of works by the authors of the local contemporary dance scene were realized in this theater during the 1990s and the 2000s.

## 1991

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**DAH THEATER** was founded at the initiative of theater directors **DIANA MILOŠEVIĆ** and **JADRANKA ANĐELIĆ**. Actress **MAJA MARKOVIĆ** and dancer, actress and choreographer **SANJA KRSMANOVIC TASIĆ** joined them. Since 2008, actress **IVANA MILENOVIĆ** is also part of the group. Dah Theater is a center for theater research, and since the beginning it was based on the exchange of knowledge, education and production of performances.

## 1994

**ISTER THEATER** was established. This theater group explores and connects dance and theater techniques of expression. Ister was founded by **ANĐELIJA TODOROVIĆ, NENAD JELIĆ** and **IRINA GILIĆ**, joined by **JELENA JOVIĆ, DANICA ARAPOVIĆ, DAMIR VIJUK** and later on by **ISIDORA STANIŠIĆ, ČARNI ĐERIĆ, DUŠAN MURIĆ, IGOR FILIPOVIĆ**, and others.

In the 1990s and 2000s, the work of independent theaters were associated with Bitef Theater because its repertoire policy at this time, included independent productions. Ister Theater still exists today and is one of the most important initiatives in the contemporary performing arts field in our country.

The **REX CULTURAL CENTER** in Belgrade was established as an independent cultural center of Radio B92. Since then, this venue hosted many performances of contemporary dance artists.



## 1995

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The first issue of **ORCHESTRA**, dance magazine, was published. The magazine was founded, and is still led by **IVANA MILOVANOVIĆ**. Important contributors for the magazine were **BRANKA RAKIĆ, MILICA JOVANOVIĆ AND JELENA ŠANTIĆ, MILICA ZAJCEV AND MIRJANA ZDRAVKOVIĆ, MIRA SUJIĆ-VITOROVIĆ, SVENKA SAVIĆ, LJILJANA MIŠIĆ, JELENA KAJGO, MILICA CEROVIĆ, MARIJA KRTOLICA, SLOBODAN TURLAKOV, MILENA JAUKOVIĆ, MILAN MAĐAREV, MARKO PEJOVIĆ, BORIS ČAKŠIRAN**, and others. The magazine still exists today, and it includes the work of the ballet and contemporary dance scene in Serbia in its reviews.

The *Omen* project led to establishing of **OMEN THEATER** that still exists today, and deals with research in the field of contemporary theater and dance. Omen was created at the initiative of theater director **GORDANA LBOVIĆ**, and other artists involved with the work. Among them are: **SLOBODAN BEŠTIĆ, VEDRAN VUČIĆ, JANOŠ BUSH, IGOR VASILJEV, ISIDORA SPASIĆ, SRĐAN VELJOVIĆ AND DUŠKO RULJEVIĆ**. The works of Omen Theater also included artists who continued to work as independent artists in the local dance scene (for example, **DRAGANA ALFIREVIĆ, MARKO MILIĆ, MAJA PELEVIĆ, BRANKA ZGONJANIN**, and others).

In Belgrade, Katarina Stojkov Slijepčević forms with Ljubiša Ristić **A DANCE GROUP IN KPGT THEATER** in Belgrade for the needs of choreographing Shakespeare's sonnets at the Shakespeare Festival. The group gathered young dancers with different dance education background: dancers from the Ballet School in Belgrade - **ISIDORA STANIŠIĆ, DALIJA AĆIN THELANDER, BOJANA MLADENOVIĆ, JOVANA ĆIRICA**, as well as non-institutionally educated dancers - **PREDRAG RAKIĆ, DUŠAN MURIĆ, ČARNI ĐERIĆ**. As an organizational infrastructure, KPGT gave the space to young contemporary dancers in Serbia to self-organize, jointly and with equality of work and self-education, which would become the key values and principles of work during the establishment of the independent dance scene in Belgrade. The group split in 2003.

At the initiative of the dramaturg **BORKA PAVIĆEVIĆ, THE CENTER FOR CULTURAL DECONTAMINATION - PAVILJON**

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**VELJKOVIĆ (CZKD)** was established, which still represents one of the places where theater works and performances are shown. During the second half of the 1990s, Sonja Vukićević worked within the CZKD, with her informal art group. Her work belonged to the field of dance theater, derived from the postmodernist German *Tanztheater*. Therefore, Sonja's work did not fall into the field of abstract dance, but a socio-critical theater, in which the physical movement was the basic medium. The performances of Sonja Vukićević from this period are: Macbeth / ONO (1996), Alzheimer (1998), Process (1998) and The Dark Summer Night (1999).

**INFANT FESTIVAL** started in Novi Sad. The festival featured performances of authors from the contemporary independent scene of performing arts - Mimart, Ister Theater, New Dance Forum (Guy Weizman, Roni Haver), Dah Theater, Perpetuum, ErgStatus, Hajde da..., Hleb Theater, Blue Theater, Omen Theater, Theater Dezsö Kosztolányi, Bitef Dance Company (Guy Weizman, Roni Haver, Edvard Klug, Jasmin Vardimon), Isidora Stanišić, Čarni Đerić, Bojana Mladenović, Dušan Murić, Dalija Aćin Thelander, Dragana Bulut, Igor Koruga, Ana Dubljević, Ljiljana Tasić and Dušan Bročić.

In the Yugoslav Drama Theater (JDP), Haris Pašović and Sonja Vukićević, realized choreodrama *The Birds* based on the Aristophanes' *Birds*. It was a dance performance in its entirety and the performers were actors of the JDP.

**SECONDARY BALLET SCHOOL "DIMITRIJE PARLIĆ"** starts its independent work in Pančevo. Until then, and since 1979, it existed as part of a music school "Jovan Bandur".

**PLAVO POZORIŠTE (BLUE THEATER)** was founded as a theater laboratory, whose ideology is based on the principles established by the 20th century practitioners: Konstantin Stanislavski, Antonin Artaud, Jerzy Grotowski, Eugenio Barba and Odin Theater, as well as the Italian director Massimo Gianetti. The theater is created at the initiative of **NENAD ČOLIĆ**, and today gathers **MAŠA JELIĆ, JELENA MARTINOVIĆ, DEJAN STOJKOVIĆ, MARKO POTKONJAK, IVANA ČOLIĆ, DUBRAVKA VUJINOVIĆ**.

## 1996

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**THE UBUS PRIZE "DIMITRIJE PARLIĆ"** was established for the best choreography in the season, as a complete choreographic opus or an exceptional performance. The previous laureates (1996 - 2016) were: **SONJA VUKIĆEVIĆ, VERA KOSTIĆ, VLADIMIR LOGUNOV, ISIDORA STANIŠIĆ, KRUNOSLAV SIMIĆ, LIDIJA PILIPENKO, ENSEMBLE OF THE NATIONAL THEATER FOR THE PERFORMANCES WHO IS SINGING OVER THERE, STEP LIGHTLY, AND SIX DANCES, ENSEMBLE OF THE DANCE THE LEANGUAGE OF THE WALLS OF THE SERBIAN NATIONAL THEATER, ISTER THEATER, MICHELE MEROLA, JASMIN VARDIMON, EDVARD KLUG, ANA PAVLOVIĆ, AND MILOŠ ISAILOVIĆ**.

**KOSZTOLÁNYI DEZSŐ THEATRE** in Subotica was formed fostering contemporary theater art. Its repertoire would later include presentations of contemporary dance, at the initiative of **DENEŠ DEBREI**. In the works of director **ANDRAŠ URBAN** who runs the theater, movement and certain choreographic principles have often been used.

**FIAT FESTIVAL** was founded in Podgorica, Montenegro (after FJAT from 1996). It showed the performances by Serbian authors and groups of contemporary dance: Isidora Stanišić, Čarni Đerić, Dušan Murić, Bojana Mladenović, Mudra Theater and others.

The dance performance "Escape from the Greenhouse", by the author **MARIJA KRTOLICA**, introduced the debut of **ANA IGNJATOVIĆ ZAGORAC**, contemporary dancer and teacher of contemporary dance.

**1997**

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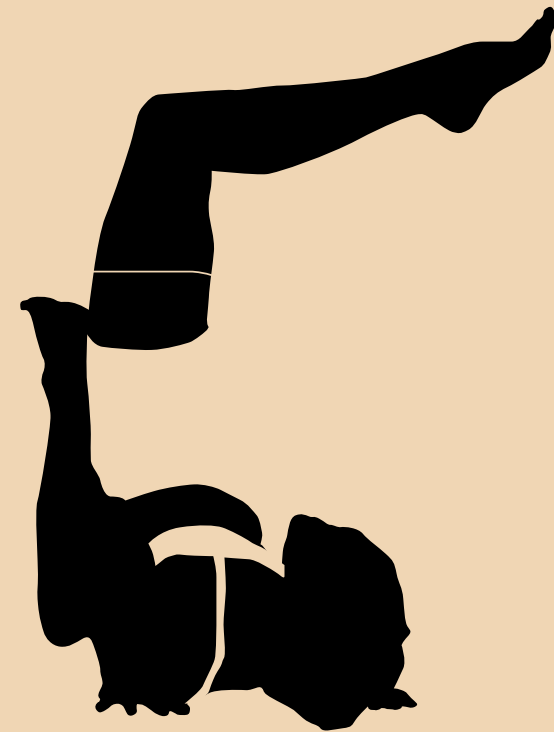
The **CHOREOGRAPHIC MINIATURES FESTIVAL** was established as an international dance festival held every year at the National Theater in Belgrade. The main part of the program is a choreographic competition that contains premiere works of short dance formats - choreographic miniatures. Laureates of the festival are: Dalija Aćin Thelander, Bojana Mladenović, Isidora Stanišić, Olivera Kovačević Crnjanski, Boris Čakširan, Dragana Bulut, Ivana Tabori, Milica Perović, Igor Koruga, Marko Milić, Dušan Murić.

By the invitation of **LIDIJA PILIPENKO**, as the Ballet Director of the National Theater in Belgrade, Isidora Stanišić and Bojana Mladenović performed their first dance performances - "Basterd" by Isidora Stanišić and "The Neck of a Black Pussy" by Bojana Mladenović.

**BELEF (BELGRADE SUMMER FESTIVAL)** was founded. In the early editions of the festival, projects, performances and dance works were often realized, in which numerous dancers and choreographers of the contemporary dance scene in Belgrade participated.

**(ERGSTATUS, DOGS)**

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## 1998

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From the project “Sign” and the premiere of “Quartet”, **THE CRAFT THEATER** was founded by Dragana Alfirević, Dejan Garboš, Rodrigo S. de Carvalho and Vedran Vučić. Craft Theater was a significant starting point for further individual development of artists, some of whom are now active and important at the level of the European contemporary dance scene as authors and curators. The work of this and other groups in Belgrade was related to the Rex Cultural Center, which as such, existed until 2017.

**THE FIRST WORKSHOP OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE**, organized at the initiative of local artists, was held as part of the Ergstatus project, which later became a dance theater. Under the guidance of choreographer, costume designer and artistic director **BORIS ČAKŠIRAN, ERGSTATUS** exists and works today, as an active part of the domestic and international dance scene, closely collaborating with several generations of dancers and choreographers: **NENAD MILOŠEVIĆ, ALEKSANDRA BJELAJAC, SANJA MITROVIĆ, BOJANA MIŠIĆ ROBINSON, DRAGANA BULUT, ANA MALJEVIĆ, JELENA STOJILJKOVIĆ RHYNES, ANDRIJANA LUBINA, JOVANA RAKIĆ, STOJAN SIMIĆ, JANA MILENKOVIĆ, NATASCHA SCHMELZ** and many others.

The first performance of the author and choreographer **DALIJA AĆIN THELANDER** “Intimus” took place as a production of BELEF Festival. Dalija’s work is significant primarily as the work of an author and an advocate for visibility and space for contemporary dance in the local context, as well as an author of choreographic installations and dance shows for children and babies, which are actively realized and presented worldwide.

## 1999

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**CENPI - CENTER FOR NEW THEATER AND DANCE** was established, and existed until 2004, initiated by Jovan Ćirilov and associates.

**PERPETUUM CENTER FOR THE ART OF MOVEMENT** (then Madlenium) was founded under the guidance of choreographer and dance teacher **SVETLANA ĐUROVIĆ**, one of the students of Dubravka Maletić. Since education in various dance techniques is one of the main activities of Perpetuum Center, many dancers and future choreographers had significant studies in Perpetuum. One of the dancers of the Perpetuum group was **ANA DUBLJEVIĆ**, who works today as an independent author and choreographer and is one of the artists gathered around Station Service for contemporary dance.

The **ASSOCIATION OF INDEPENDENT THEATERS** was formed, and held annual presentations from 1999 until 2002.

## 2000

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**POD THEATER** was founded in Belgrade at the initiative of Tatjana Pajović, who was a part of the Association of Independent Theaters until 2005.

Educational project **CENTER FOR CONTEMPORARY PERFORMANCE EXPERIENCE** was initiated by Olivera Kovačević Crnjanski, Ivana Inđin and Saša Asentić in cooperation with the Cultural Center of Novi Sad, where dancers, choreographers and theater directors from the local dance scene participated as educators.

**OPEN SCHOOL OF CONTEMPORARY PERFORMING ARTS - EXPEDITION OF MULTIDISCIPLINARY INVENTORS**, started in Student Cultural Centre (SKC) in Belgrade. It was designed to educate youngsters exploring and creating in the field of performing arts. Authors of the project were **IVAN PRAVDIĆ** and **OLGA GLIŠIN**.

## 2001

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The first issue of the **WALKING THEORY (TKH)** magazine is published, which deals with contemporary performing arts. So far, two issues have been entirely dedicated to contemporary dance (No. 4 and No. 18). Editors were: Bojana Cvejić, Bojan Djordjev, Siniša Ilić, Vlatko Ilić, Marija Karaklajić, Marko Kostanić, Tanja Marković, Aldo Milohnić, Jelena Novak, Marta Popivoda, Ivana Stamatović, Miško Šuvaković, and Ana Vujanović.

Festival of contemporary dance **BODYSHOP** was organized by the Madlenium group.

## 2002

Formal organization of the **TkH - WALKING THEORY** took place. This group of theoretical and artistic researchers, which was informally made in 2000, was founded by: **ANA VUJANOVIĆ, MARTA POPIVODA, BOJANA CVEJIĆ, BOJAN DJORDJEV, SINIŠA ILIĆ, KATARINA POPOVIĆ, DRAGANA JOVOVIĆ, AND JELENA KNEŽEVIĆ.**

An informal group **AD HOC LOM**, initiated by Bojana Mladenović, Isidora Stanišić, Čarni Đerić and Dušan Murić, was formed. Although the group did not last long, founders continued to work and individually contributed to modern dance in the country and beyond, as authors, choreographers and teachers: Isidora Stanišić became the first contemporary dance teacher at "Lujo Davičo" Ballet School, Bojana Mladenović is today the art director of the School for New Dance Development in Amsterdam, Dušan Murić and Čarni Đerić work as authors and choreographers in Serbia and abroad.

## 2003

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The **FORUM FOR NEW DANCE** was established as a project of the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad with the intention of deepening theatrical research that incorporates the experience of contemporary dance, theater, visual arts and performance elements. The initiators of the project were **JASNA KOVAČIĆ, ANDREW PETER GREENWOOD, BRANKO POPOVIĆ, IVANA INĐIN AND OLIVERA KOVAČEVIĆ-CRNJANSKI**. Olivera nurtured the New Dance Forum until 2017, first as Ballet Director and then as one of the initiators and project leaders. Saša Asentić, Jens van Dal, Guy Veizman, Roni Haver, Galina Borissova, Rosana Hribar, Gregor Luštek, Dragana Bulut, Minja Bogavac, Ivana Inđin, Aleksandar Acev and James Amar collaborated with the Forum.

Establishment of the **CONTEMPORARY DANCE DEPARTMENT** at the Ballet School in Novi Sad. The first generation was led by professor **ALEKSANDRA KETIG** (next to her were Maja Grnja, Snežana Ađanski, Boris Ladičorbić and later on Jelena Alempijević, Sara Tošić and Frosina Dimovska).

Establishment of the **CONTEMPORARY DANCE DEPARTMENT** at "Lujó Davičo" Ballet School in Belgrade. The first generation was led by Isidora Stanišić and Katarina Stojkov. Professors **ANA IGNJATOVIĆ-ZAGORAC, IVANA LJUJIĆ, JELENA KAJGO, DEJANA BUDIŠKA** and **SANJA CVRKOTIĆ** joined them later on.

The **DDT CREATIVE CENTER** was initialized by dancers and choreographers **TIJANA MALEK, DRAGANA STANISAVLJEVIĆ, DUBRAVKA SUBOTIĆ** and later on joined by **IVANA LJUJIĆ**. DDT collaborates with dancers from the local and international scene, cultivating various dance techniques.

The first **CHILDREN'S FESTIVAL TIBA** was held, which included an award-winning dance performance for children and babies, whose authors were choreographers from the independent dance scene (Dušan Murić, Dalija Aćin Thelander).

## 2004

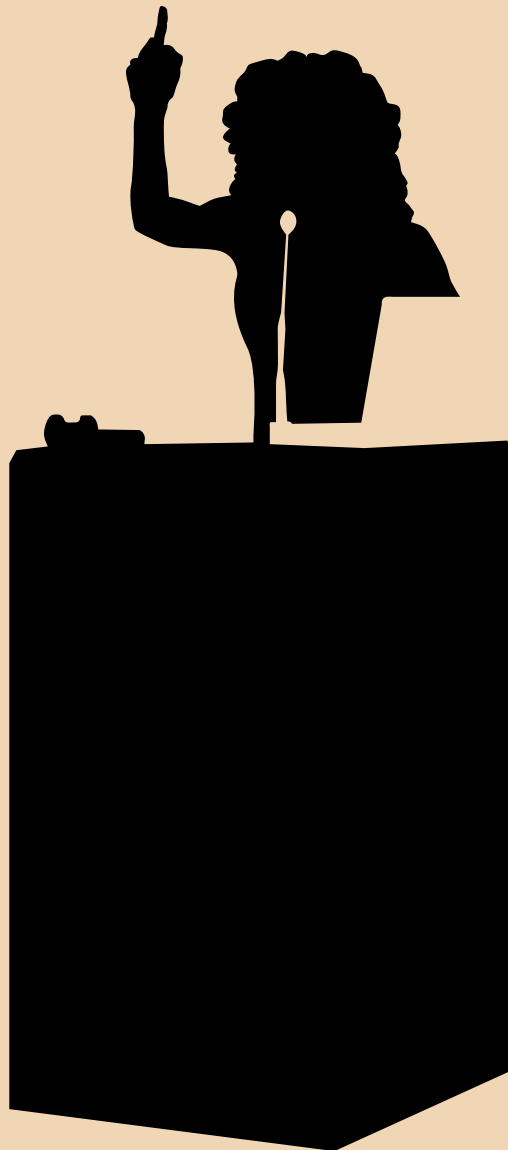
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The **FESTIVAL OF EUROPEAN CONTEMPORARY CHOREOGRAPHY - PRO TOOLS** was held at the initiative of Bojana Cvejić, organized by TkH, which presented the work of choreographers such as Xavier Le Roy, Mårten Spångberg, Mette Ingvarsten and Tino Sehgal. The festival had only one edition.

The first **BELGRADE DANCE FESTIVAL**, that still exists today, was held and presented renowned examples of dance art from around the world, most often by famous authors and companies.

Choreographer and author **DRAGANA BULUT** realizes her first dance performance *Just another solo* that comes from an awarded choreographic miniature at the Festival of Choreographic Miniatures in Belgrade.

Choreographer **DUŠAN MURIĆ**, from an author's position, realizes the first dance performance for children "The Snow Queen" in the Duško Radović Theater.



## 2005

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**NOMAD DANCE ACADEMY (NDA)** network was established. It connects artists and organizations from Macedonia, Bulgaria, Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia through the promotion of contemporary dance, research and educational programs. This network and platform, as a regional structure in constant growth and learning process, aspires to continually connect different participants around the common discourse and to articulate the needs relevant in the context of the Balkans and its neighbors. In addition, the NDA aims to develop its capacities and become visible as a competent interlocutor that advocates the needs of the entire sector.

**PER.ART**, an organization that deals with promotion, production and education in the field of performing arts, started working in Novi Sad. The founders and participants of the organization were **SAŠA ASENTIĆ, NATAŠA MURGE SAVIĆ, TATJANA TUCIĆ, FROSINA DIMOVSKA, DRAGANA B. STEVANOVIĆ, BRANISLAV SAVIĆ, DRAGANA GALOVIĆ, BILJANA RADEKA, LUKA KULIĆ, HANA MARKVARD, AND DUNJA CRNJANSKI.** This is the organization that has the longest and the most persistent program about inclusion through art.

**POD THEATER** was founded formally in Belgrade as a result of the project *Play Against Violence* from which the young participants of the program focused on professional work in theater. Through workshops, seminars and permanent work, they developed the skills of educators and trainers in several areas: drama in education, theater of the oppressed, drama workshops.

**MUDRA THEATER** started working in Belgrade, at the initiative of theater director **IVANA AŠKOVIĆ.** The collaborators in work of theatre were Jelena Stojiljković Rhynes, Jelena Milinović, Andrijana Lubina, Jovana Rakić, Miona Petrović, Boris Čakširan. All artists continued their individual work in various fields of performing arts.



**STATION SERVICE FOR CONTEMPORARY DANCE** was founded in Belgrade, at the initiative of individuals and organizations active in the contemporary dance scene in Belgrade (over 40 participants), with the idea to create a platform through which various activities will be implemented. From the beginning, the work was focused on strengthening this artistic community, its structure and recognition, and integration into the cultural system in Serbia and the Balkans, as well as on the international scene. Since then, STATION initiated and realized many co-productions or presentations of contemporary dance within the frames of festivals or other programs and cooperates with theaters and other institutions in Serbia and abroad. Since its establishment, Station has had several models of organizational structure: the program coordinators were **DALIJA AĆIN THELANDER, BOJANA MLADENOVIĆ, AND DRAGANA ALFIREVIĆ**, and the organization and management were done by **MARIJANA CVETKOVIĆ**. From 2012 to 2016, Marijana Cvetković coordinated the program development, and **KSENIJA ĐUROVIĆ, TATJANA NIKOLIĆ, AND MIRJANA DRAGOSAVLJEVIĆ** were the organizers. Since 2016, a new structure has been established in which the coordination and organization of the program is shared by artists and associates gathered around Station: **ANA DUBLJEVIĆ, DALIJA AĆIN THELANDER, DUŠAN MURIĆ, IGOR KORUGA, JOVANA RAKIĆ, KSENIJA ĐUROVIĆ, MARKO MILIĆ, MARIJANA CVETKOVIĆ, MIRJANA DRAGOSAVLJEVIĆ**. Station, together with the Nomad Dance Academy Network, held a regional conference on contemporary dance in the Cultural Center Magacin, featuring the NDA Network and its plans for a regional cooperation. The project of Station named **FOSTERING CREATIVITY** has been launched in order to support young authors in the realisation of their first works through education and production support. This created new choreographers and authors of dance performances like: **ANA DUBLJEVIĆ, MARKO MILIĆ, KSENIJA ĐORĐEVIĆ, LJILJANA TASIĆ, DUŠAN BROČIĆ, HULIA KAROLINA GOROSITO, NENAD MILOŠEVIĆ, DUBRAVKA SUBOTIĆ, MIONA PETROVIĆ**.

The first **DESIRE FESTIVAL** in Subotica was organized by the Kosztolányi Dezső Theatre.

**MILOŠ SOFRENOVIĆ**, choreographer and dance artist realizes his first piece "Play" in Bitef Theater.



## 2007

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The **DEPARTMENT FOR CONTEMPORARY DANCE** at the Ballet School "Dimitrije Parlić" started in Pančevo. The first professor of contemporary dance was Aleksandra Malijar, who continues to teach to date. From 2012 to 2014, dancer Milica Pisić was also one of the teachers.

An initiative has been launched to gradually transform the Cultural center "Vuk Karadžić" into the **BELGRADE DANCE CENTER**, but this initiative, unfortunately, was interrupted after two years.

Saša Asentić realized the work **MY PRIVATE BIOPOLITICS**, performed more than 40 times in Europe and the US. Together with Ana Vujanović, he was the author of the research project **TIGER'S LEAP INTO THE PAST** and **RECYCLE BIN**, significant for understanding the context and development of contemporary dance in Serbia.

**THE CULTURAL CENTER MAGACIN** started to work, as a space for artists from the independent dance scene.

## 2008

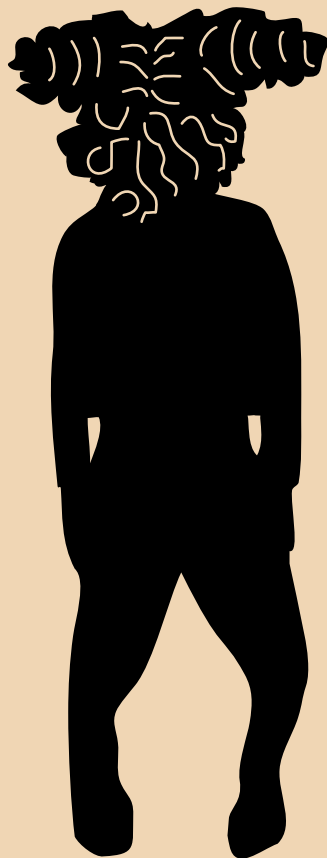
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The first regional educational program in the field of contemporary dance **NOMAD DANCE ACADEMY** for young authors from Slovenia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Serbia, Bulgaria and Macedonia was realized. The four-month educational program and a work with experts from various fields of contemporary performing arts was held three times - 2008, 2009, and 2010. Through this program, several authors of the younger generation from the local scene have passed: Ana Dubljević, Igor Koruga, Jovana Rakić, and Jana Jevtović.

The first **KONDENZ - FESTIVAL OF CONTEMPORARY DANCE AND PERFORMANCE** was organized by the Station - Service for Contemporary Dance, at the initiative of choreographer Dalija Aćin Thelander, culture manager, producer and curator Marijana Cvetković, and choreographer Dragana Alfirević. The festival promotes contemporary art, but also questions the formats and the concept of artistic works presented and the festival itself.

The group **WHITE SHADOW** is formed on the initiative of **ALEKSANDRA BJELAJAC**.

Dalija Aćin Thelander won the first prize **GRAND PRIX JARDIN D'EUROPE** for her work *Handle with the great care* at the ImPulsTanz festival in Vienna.



## 2009

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**BITEF DANCE COMPANY** was founded as a Bitef Theater project, at the initiative of Jelena Kajgo, the Ballet School Lujo Davičo professor, dramaturg, and then manager of Bitef Theater. The company's pedagogue was Isidora Stanišić. The dancers who were part of the company or worked there are **ANA IGNJATOVIĆ ZAGORAC, MIONA PETROVIĆ, OLGA OLČAR, NEVENA UROŠEVIĆ, MILICA PISIĆ, MILICA JEVIĆ, AŠHEN ATALJANC, MILOŠ ISAILOVIĆ, NATAŠA GVOZDENOVIĆ, TAMARA PJEVIĆ, JOVAN ZELENOVIĆ, DEJAN KOLAROV, IVANA SAVIĆ JACIĆ, LUKA MIHOVILOVIĆ, LUKA LUKIĆ, NIKOLA TOMAŠEVIĆ, NEMANJA NAUMOVSKI, ĐORĐE MAKAREVIĆ, UROŠ PETRONIJEVIĆ, STRAHINJA LACKOVIĆ, VLADIMIR ČUBRILO.**

For the first time, educational project **PUZZLE** was organized by the Station Service for contemporary dance with choreographers and dance teachers from the country and abroad: Frederic Gies, Martin Sonderkamp, Selma Banič, Anđelija Todorović, Dušan Murić, Dalija Aćin Thelander, Dragana Bulut, Saša Božić, Matej Kejžar and active young dancers Jovana Rakić, Miona Petrović, Milica Pisić, Sandra Vidović, Dragana Milošević.

A regional dance festival **BALKAN DANCE PLATFORM** was held, organized by the Per.Art organization at the Serbian National Theater in Novi Sad.

## 2010

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The group **HAJDE DA... (LET'S DO...)** from Belgrade began with the dance project *Frame of the body* and the performance of *Curve for Gauss*. The author of the project was dramaturg **MARKO PEJOVIĆ**, choreographer Boris Čakširan and Sanja Krsmanović Tasić. The project consisted of education and production involving young dancers with and without disabilities (among others **DANIJEL TODOROVIĆ, STOJAN SIMIĆ, SENAD SOPNIĆ, SVETLANA DAVIDOVIĆ**, and others).

The first festival **NOV.PLES** in Novi Sad was held, organized by Per.Art, at the initiative of Olivera Kovačević Crnjanski and Saša Asentić. The festival lasted until 2013.

In addition to the UBUS dance awards, choreographic work is institutionally evaluated only in *Sterijino pozorje* festival, with the highest annual award for choreographic work within national drama and theater (although only in the service of drama performances). Two choreographers were recognized and awarded with a **“SCENE MOVEMENT / CHOREOGRAPHY AWARD”** - Dalija Aćin Thelander 2011 for *Metamorphosis* by Aleksandar Popovski, and **ANDREA KULEŠEVIĆ** in 2010 for the performance *Pomorandžina kora (Orange Peel)*, directed by Kokan Mladenović, at Novi Sad Theater, and in 2015 for the performance of *Doctor Nušić*, directed by Kokan Mladenović, in Kruševac Theater and the National Theater of Sombor.<sup>3</sup>

**DRAGANA BULUT** won the Grand Prix Jardin d'Europe at the ImPulsTanz Festival in Vienna with the performance of EIO, as a co-author with Eduard Gabia and Maria Baroncea from Romania.

## 2011

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The first live art festival **LIMIT** was held at the Belgrade Youth Centre.

The first festival of engaged theatre **OFF FRAME (Van okvira)** was held in Belgrade and organised by the group *Hajde da...*The festival presented several contemporary dance performances and inclusive dance workshops and projects.

**THE INDEPENDENT CULTURE SCENE OF SERBIA** association was founded, and Station Service for contemporary dance was one of the founders.

The **TEMPORARIES** project was started as a self-organized initiative of 6 authors of the younger generation: **ANA DUBLJEVIĆ, LJILJANA TASIĆ, JOVANA RAKIĆ, IGOR KORUGA, MARKO MILIĆ AND DUŠAN BROČIĆ**. The aim was to question the working conditions within the local dance context and form a platform for artistic and educational exchange. The project lasted from 2011 to 2013.

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<sup>3</sup> Milica Ivić, Igor Koruga “ARCHIVING THE CONTEMPORARY ART OF DANCE IN SERBIA: Issues with institutionalization, or on betraying the ‘independence’ of the local dance scene”, Maska Performing Arts Journal, independent issue, Ljubljana 2017

## 2012

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The **SMILJANA MANDUKIĆ AWARD** was established for the best interpretation in contemporary artistic dance, and bestowed by the Association of Ballet Artists (UBUS). So far, the laureates have been: **SANJA NINKOVIĆ, NEVENA JOVANOVIĆ, MILICA PISIĆ AND IVANA SAVIĆ JAČIĆ, ANA IGNJATOVIĆ ZAGORAC, RIKARDO KAMPUŠ FREIRE, NIKOLA TOMAŠEVIĆ, STRAHINJA LACKOVIĆ.**

The international symposium **THE DRAIN OF THE SCENE**, initiated by Saša Asentić, tackling the trend of emigration of artists and experts and its impact on the independent performing arts scene in Serbia was held at the Matica Srpska Gallery in Novi Sad, and it gathered artists, arts and culture theoreticians, migration experts, journalists, students, social activists, culture managers, representatives of cultural institutions and of the independent scene.

**THE DANCE INSTITUTE** was founded as the first higher education institution for education in the domain of ballet and contemporary dance, started at the initiative of ballet artist, dancer and choreographer **ALEKSANDAR ILIĆ.**

## 2014

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Dalija Aćin Thelander initiated **GENERATOR COOPERATION PLATFORM** for the development of children's dance theatre in the Balkans, organized by Station Service for contemporary dance and its partner organisations from Croatia, Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

**HLEB TEATAR (BREAD THEATRE)** was founded at the initiative of choreographer, actress and performance author Sanja Krsmanović Tasić. **JUGOSLAV HADŽIĆ** and **ANASTASIJA TASIĆ** are also active in the company.

The critics' mentoring programme **CRITICAL PRACTICE (MADE IN YU)** was organised by Station Service for contemporary dance and the NDA network, which supports new generations of authors who write about contemporary dance and performing arts.

The **SPECIAL AWARD OF UBUS** was established for innovative approach in the domain of contemporary dance theatre. The laureates have been Dalija Aćin Thelander, Isidora Stanišić, and Jovana Rakić.



## 2015

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**PRAKTIKABL - PLATFORM FOR CONTEMPORARY ART AND CULTURE** was founded in Novi Sad. The founders were artists from the domain of contemporary dance, music and visual arts: **JELENA ALEMPIJEVIĆ, DUNJA CRNJANSKI, FROSINA DIMOVSKA, SARA TOŠIĆ AND LUKA KULIĆ.**

## 2016

Several organisations of the independent dance scene filed a law suit against the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia due to irregular and non-transparent operation of the open calls commission, which deprived a great number of organisations and independent artists (including UBUS, Bitef Dance Company and Station Service for contemporary dance) of funding and disabled their annual activities. The suit was accepted by the Administrative Court and is an ongoing procedure.

**FORUM FOR NEW DANCE** ceases its operation.

**BITEF DANCE COMPANY** operates on a minimal budget.

The manifestation “**DANI SMILJANE MANDUKIĆ**” was held at the initiative of Sanja Krsmanović Tasić and Bread Theater.

The majority of artists and companies and independent theaters is either unsupported, or less than modestly supported by cultural institutions in Serbia.

There are **NO PERMANENT PLACES FOR CREATING AND PRESENTING** the development of contemporary dance and audience.

There are **NO STRUCTURAL GRANTS FOR INDEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS** despite it being the only sustainable way for them to invest their work in strategic development of their field.

There are **NO GRANTS SUPPORTING REGIONAL COOPERATION** and joint projects in contemporary art in order to enable presence and visibility of each country across the region and Europe.

There are no transparent procedures, decision-making processes and processes for the participation of relevant professionals in the creation of policies and instruments for contemporary dance. That is why Station Service for contemporary dance and Nomad Dance Academy initiate the **NOMAD DANCE ADVOCATES** in Belgrade 2017, an event dedicated to advocating for survival and development of contemporary dance in Serbia and the region.

During the 2000s, a large number of authors operated in Serbia, mostly specifically linked to the contemporary dance field. Among them are the previously mentioned **NELA ANTONOVIĆ, BORIS ČAKŠIRAN, DALIJA AČIN THELANDER, DRAGANA ALFIREVIĆ, ISIDORA STANIŠIĆ, BOJANA MLADENOVIĆ, DUŠAN MURIĆ, SAŠA ASENTIĆ, DANICA ARAPOVIĆ, SVETLANA ĐUROVIĆ, DENEŠ DEBREI**, and later on, also a younger generation authors still operating today: **MILOŠ SOFRENOVIĆ, BRANKA ZGONJANIN, KSENIJA ĐORĐEVIĆ, OLGA GLIŠIN, TIJANA MALEK, MILICA PEROVIĆ, DRAGANA STANISAVLJEVIĆ, IVANA TABORI, ALEKSANDRA BJELAJAC, DRAGANA BULUT, BOJANA DENIĆ, ĐORĐE MAKAREVIĆ, ALEKSANDAR ILIĆ, ANA DUBLJEVIĆ, MARKO MILIĆ, NENAD MILOŠEVIĆ, HULIA GOROSITO, MIONA PETROVIĆ, DUBRAVKA SUBOTIĆ, JOVANA RAKIĆ, IGOR KORUGA, LJILJANA TASIĆ, BRANKA ZGONJANIN, MILOŠ ISAILOVIĆ** and others.

The dancers/performers (some of them have been and still are working as dance pedagogues, thus significantly contributing to the scene) who have been educated and working from 2000 onwards are: **ANA IGNJATOVIĆ ZAGORAC, MILICA PISIĆ, AŠHEN ATALJANC, JELENA MILANOVIĆ-ĆIRICA, HULIA KAROLINA GOROSITO, NANAD MILOŠEVIĆ, ANDRIJANA LUBINA, DUNJA CRNIĆ, DRAGANA MILOŠEVIĆ, NEVENA UROŠEVIĆ, PREDRAG RADOVANČEVIĆ, ČARNI ĐERIĆ, PREDRAG RAKIĆ, JELENA STOJILJKOVIĆ, DUBRAVKA SUBOTIĆ, DRAGANA STANISAVLJEVIĆ, TIJANA MALEK, ANA BASTAĆ, SANJA VINKOVIĆ, NIKOLA VRANIĆ, NEVENA UROŠEVIĆ, UROŠ PETRONIJEVIĆ, DEJAN KOLAROV, NIKOLA TOMAŠEVIĆ, LUKA LUKIĆ, NATAŠA GVOZDENOVIĆ, STOJAN SIMIĆ, DANIJEL TODOROVIĆ, OLGA AVRAMOVIĆ, FROSINA DIMOVSKA, MAJA GRNJA, JELENA KOLČERIU, ANDREA KULEŠEVIĆ, ANA LEČIĆ-INJAC, DANIJELA VOJNOVSKI, JELENA ŠUJICA (ACTIVE AT THE FORUM FOR THE NEW DANCE), SO AS THE DANCERS OF THE COMPANY PERPETUUM DANCE CENTRE, MIMART THEATER** and others.

The dancers, pedagogues and authors of the youngest generation educated at ballet schools in Belgrade, Novi Sad and Pančevo, at the Dance Institute or informally through workshops and education programmes, have also been active

during the past few years, including: **SARA TOŠIĆ, JELENA ALEMPIJEVIĆ, INA MADŽAR, ŽELJKA JAKOVLJEVIĆ, MIA INIĆ, TEODORA BEBA ŽIVKOVIĆ, ENA ETINA GUCUNSKI, NATAŠA VRANEŠEVIĆ, NATASCHA SCHMELZ, JANA MILENKOVIĆ, TAMARA PJEVIĆ, MINA KONTIĆ, JOVANA ZELENOVIĆ, BRANKO MITROVIĆ, VLADIMIR ČUBRILO, KATARINA BUĆIĆ, MARIJA VUČENOVIĆ, KATARINA STOJKOVIĆ, MAJA MARKOVIĆ, BORIS VIDA KOVIĆ, JOVANA IKONIĆ, MILA STIJAK, JELENA BULATOVIĆ, STOJAN SIMIĆ, VLADIMIR ARSENIJEVIĆ, LUKA MIHOVILOVĆ, STEFAN VESELINOVIĆ, TIJANA ŠUĆUROVIĆ, NINA PANTOVIĆ, KATARINA ILIJAŠEVIĆ, VANJA HALUPA, ANDREA DOBRIĆ, TRISTAN AL-HINNAWI, JAKŠA FILIPOVAĆ, LUKA STOJKOVIĆ, ADREA KARGAČIN, NINA PUTNIK, ALEKSANDRA ČAVIĆ, MILICA MUČIBABIĆ** and many others...

There are also artists, cultural workers and institutions who, through their investment, have supported the work, visibility and survival of the contemporary dance art, or closely cooperated with artists and organisations. Some of them are: **LJUBICA BELJANSKI RISTIĆ, DIJANA KRŽANIĆ TEPAVAC - ASSITEJ SRBIJA, INDEPENDENT CULTURE SCENE OF SERBIA, DIRECTOR IVANA VUJIĆ, SUNČICA MILOSAVLJEVIĆ, CIRKUSFERA, IVANA KORAKSIĆ, IRENA RISTIĆ, ANĐELKA NIKOLIĆ (HOP.LA!), MILENA DRAGIĆEVIĆ ŠEŠIĆ, MILAN MARKOVIĆ MATTHIS** and many others.

**NOTE:** During the making of this historical timeline we have used the information found on the internet and obtained in conversation with individual dance scene participants (articles from the Orchestra magazine, interviews with artists and cultural workers, web pages of companies and organisations).

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This handbook **WHAT IS CONTEMPRARY DANCE (IN SERBIA)** was made at the initiative of artists and cultural workers gathered around the organisation Station Service for contemporary dance, in relation to the Nomad Dance Advocates in Belgrade 2017.

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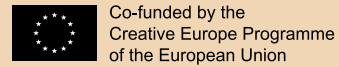
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**Handbook WHAT IS CONTEMPORARY DANCE (IN SERBIA)** contains short explanations and insight in the basic elements and development phases of this art practice in Serbia. In our environment contemporary dance is a young field where the pillars of development are self-organized and mainly noninstitutional actors of the dance scene. Therefore, the scene is built as a manifestation of their desire and need to bring their field into the cultural system belonging to their context. This is done by arranging the working conditions on the scene, strengthening its position and raising visibility of their artistic community, establishing it in international waters, and also maintaining permanent communication with the audience and other professionals from similar or completely different artistic fields.

