

## ***Deus ex machina* in continuous and discrete motion in dance**

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### **Abstract**

During the 1990s, as computers became firmly embedded in the social, business, and artistic fabric of industrialized societies, the intermedial concept of humanmade aesthetic artifacts became challenged through information theory and through digital technology. In harking back to the technical tools of “old media”, such as the *deus ex machina*, the commentary voice of the ancient chorus or to the “modern multimedia” avant-garde performances, the concept of ‘digital performance’ will be explored against the flattening opposition between old and new media of the postmodern or the digital age. At the same time, ‘digital performance’ is different from Bolter and Grusin’s paradoxical concept of “remediation” and from Elleström’s transmediation model that foregrounds the transfer of both what Bruhn calls “communicative content” and formal characteristics throughout time distinct from communication technology. In challenging these meta-narratives, the concept of “digital performance” highlights the variations of the discrete and continuous movement techniques in dance that are choreographed with and without digital technology.

I will discuss dance as a medium of non-verbal communication that foregrounds rhythmic movements of the human body in the light of physical features, of personal space and time, and of *techne*, including technology. My goal is to explore the “augmented” or intensified potential aesthetic that unfolds by altering presence and absence of discrete and continuous “information”. Drawing from the variation of movements as a rhetorical or a musical mode, I foreground the potentiality to affect rather than transmit “content messages”, as dance can increase the effect of recognizing other lines or voices as a performative becoming while being inseparable from its counterpoint. Attention and affect are only evoked with respect to the principles of difference and repetition in relation to their surroundings. In short, I will argue that not the discrete digital technology in isolation but also the framed stages or screens showcase a *theatron* designed to draw attention to the aesthetic potential entangled with the spatiotemporally dependent expectations of and intra-actions with different perceivers.

## **Keywords**

Digital performance, discrete, continuous, movement

## **Bio**

Heidrun Führer, works as Associate Professor at the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences within the Division of Culture Management and Intermediality at Lund University. Her research field is ekphrasis, theatre, performativity, the Total work of Art, and advertising.

To list some of her publications:

Heidrun Führer, Anna Kraus, 2019. "Leaving the White Cube of Ekphrasis. Gordon Matta-Clark's Conical Intersection" in Salmose, Niklas and Elleström, Lars (eds) *Transmediations: Communication Across Media Borders - Communication Across Media Borders* Routledge, 97-117.

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