

Braiding/Unbraiding/Rebraiding

Headlong Dance Theater Examines Artistic Process
in Collaboration with Tere O'Connor



Produced by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage

This is an archival version of *Braiding/Unbraiding/Rebraiding*, which originally appeared as a Flash publication in The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage's *Danceworkbook* series. The presentation of the original Flash publication has been altered to fit this PDF format.

Danceworkbook was a series produced by The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage, between 2009 and 2015, to document the creative practice of living and working with dance.

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David Brick, Andrew Simonet,
Amy Smith, Nichole Canuso,
Niki Cousineau, Devynn Emory,
Jaamil Olawale Kosoko, Kate
Watson-Wallace, Christina
Zani, Tere O'Connor, Anna
Drozdowski, Byron Karabatsos,
Headlong Dance Theater

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“Choreographic Thinking:
Beyond Voyeurism, Beyond
Spoken Language” by Tere
O'Connor

“Dislodging Dance Practices”
by Anna Drozdowski

“An Open Letter on Observing”
by Anna Drozdowski

Anna Drozdowski: Selected
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BRAIDING / UNBRAIDING / REBRAIDING

HEADLONG DANCE THEATER EXAMINES ARTISTIC PROCESS IN COLLABORATION WITH TERE O'CONNOR

WHAT IS THIS?
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Philadelphia's Headlong Dance Theater invited Tere O'Connor, director of Tere O'Connor Dance in New York City, to join them over the course of four months in 2007 for rehearsals, workshops, and discussion. Headlong's intention was to engage an innovator in the field in sustained dialogue, part of their continuing effort to challenge themselves and remain porous about their creative processes. O'Connor brought new strategies to Headlong's dance studio; he asked the company's three co-directors to work independently from the start. With this radical alteration to their usual practice, and without the pressure of needing to produce a finished dance, this dedicated time became a research laboratory—and the conversations that resulted extended beyond the studio to become part of the participants' interwoven lives. [These are their stories.](#)



AMY SMITH
COMP 501



ANDREW SIMONET
WHY TERE, WHY NOW



DAVID BRICK
FREAKS



TERE O'CONNOR
LESS DEMOCRACY

Extend the discussion?

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MAY 28, 2008
HEADLONG'S OFFICE

Anna conducted interviews with Amy, Andrew, David, and Tere long after the first phase of the research concluded in 2008.



AMY SMITH
COMP 501

NEXT IN
STREAM:



50 WHY PROJECT



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JULY 6, 2008
TERE'S APARTMENT, NYC

Anna conducted interviews with Amy, Andrew, David, and Tere long after the first phase of the research concluded in 2008.



TERE O'CONNOR
LESS DEMOCRACY

NEXT IN
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80
DANCE MEDITATION



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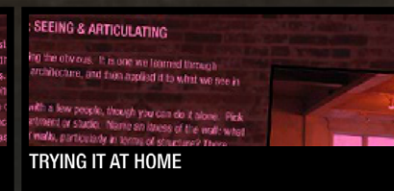
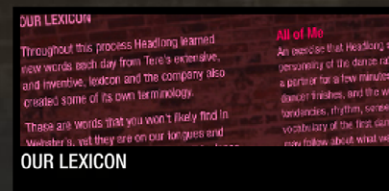
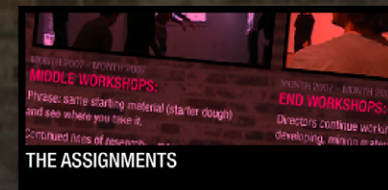
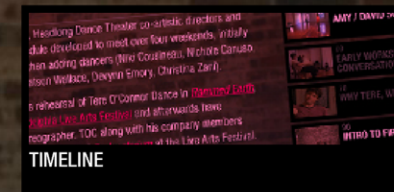
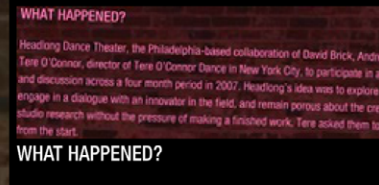
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WHAT IS THIS?

Headlong invites you to play around in this workbook and use it as a portal to our process and work with choreographer Tere O'Connor. Follow the individual paths of one project participant or bounce back and forth between sections to see, hear, and read.

Included are the timelines and assignments, which you can both watch or read about. You can be a fly on the wall in the studio and also get deeper information direct from the source. The Lexicon was developed to explain our shorthand and newly-earned vocabulary.

Contained in this workbook is the initial phase of our inquiry: a process that has been reexamined at each exciting meeting and continues to inform our work. We are interested in knowing if this work translates or extends beyond the dance field and hope you'll try it at home or in the studio. We invite comments and responses from individuals in any field.



Extend the discussion?

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WHO ARE THEY? WHAT HAPPENED?

Headlong Dance Theater, the Philadelphia-based collaboration of David Brick, Andrew Simonet, and Amy Smith, invited Tere O'Connor, director of Tere O'Connor Dance in New York City, to participate in a series of rehearsals, workshops and discussion across a four month period in 2007. Headlong's idea was to explore new tools for making dances, engage in a dialogue with an innovator in the field, and remain porous about the creative process by dedicating time to studio research without the pressure of making a finished work. Tere asked them to work independently of one another from the start.

Dancers Nichole Canuso, Niki Cousineau, Devynn Emory, Jaamil Kosoko, Kate Watson-Wallace, and Christina Zani, who collectively share a diverse history dancing for Headlong, became the very able and articulate bodies in the room through most of the process. Byron Karabatsos videotaped a portion of this phase of the research and began making a documentary about Headlong and their work with O'Connor. Anna Drozdowski, Managing Director, documented the process. At the end of their collective and individual investigations, the company presented the results at an informal showing at the Spirit Wind Studio in Philadelphia on December 9, 2007.

Each of the directors found a way to continue this company process after the formal timeframe ended: Amy returned to studio research/rehearsals with a smaller group of dancers; David made a work called *Dirt Snap* as his contribution to the Bryn Mawr College dance faculty concert in the Spring of 2008; and Andrew took the TOC "toolbox" to Dance Theater Camp in April 2008 to see if this process worked for other artists within a short but structured timeframe. Tere and Anna both wrote about their experiences as part of this project.

Buoyed by their work together and their extraordinarily satisfying conversations, in late 2008 these same artists subsequently embarked on further phases of this project, again working loosely with Tere as chief provocateur. Each Headlong director pursued a line of choreographic research working with the same group of six dancers. The work of each director was unknown to the other two (formally unbraiding their fifteen-year collaboration for the first time) until April 4, 2009 when the three studies were performed jointly in a public showing moderated by Tere. These three works

became a starting point for a new dance intended to premiere in September 2009 at the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival.

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WHAT IS THIS? TIMELINE

DATE:

NOTES:

JUMP:

AUGUST 2007

Tere O'Connor (TOC) and Anna Drozdowski, manager of Headlong Dance Theater (HDT), meet in New York City regarding scheduling.



HEADLONG DANCE THEATER



TERE O'CONNOR DANCE

SEPTEMBER 2007

Initial meeting with TOC, HDT co-artistic directors and documenter Anna. Schedule developed to meet over four weekends, initially with directors only and then adding dancers (Niki Cousineau, Nichole Canuso, Jaamil Kosoko, Kate Watson-Wallace, Devynn Emory, and Christina Zani).

Headlong attends dress rehearsal of Tere O'Connor Dance in *Rammed Earth*, presented at the *Philadelphia Live Arts Festival* and afterwards have conversation with choreographer. TOC along with his company members subsequently attend performance of *Explanatorium* at the Live Arts Festival.



50 WHY PROJECT



60 WHY PROJECT



70 WHY PROJECT



90 FIRST ASSIGNMENT

OCTOBER 2007

First TOC visit to Philadelphia. Co-directors work with TOC in the studio; conversation & defining of terms (dance terms, working terms, habits, philosophies, etc.).

Co-directors complete their dance Blah-Blah-Blahs (non-structured manifestos).

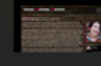
Co-directors work independently on solo assignments inspired by TOC



80 DANCE MEDITATION



140 INDIVIDUAL REHEARSALS



AMY'S BLAH BLAH BLAH

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Co-directors work independently on solo assignments inspired by TOC.

HDT hosts a First Friday performance that includes sections of the TOC work.



80
DANCE MEDITATION



140
INDIVIDUAL REHEARSALS



AMY'S BLAH BLAH BLAH



**ANDREW'S
BLAH BLAH BLAH**

NOVEMBER 2007

Two weekend sessions are held with TOC. Directors meet together first then joined by dancers each day.

Anna begins a blog for dancer discussion, which promptly dies.

[Lisa Kraus](#), Philadelphia dance writer, choreographer, and director of the [Bryn Mawr College](#) performing arts series attends an afternoon rehearsal as embedded participant.

Andrew goes on paternity leave, changing the project scope slightly.

Co-directors continue to work on projects with a shared set of dancers.

HDT hosts a First Friday, which TOC attends, in a program that highlights the group work.



260
INTRO TO FIRST FRIDAY



280
DANCER RESEARCH



410
**DANCER WARMUP
FIRST DAY**



430
**COLLABORATION
CONVERSATION**

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WHAT IS THIS?
TIMELINE

DATE:	NOTES:	JUMP:
DECEMBER 2007	The last TOC weekend. Participants assemble at the Spirit Wind space for a showing with a core group of interested dancemakers, doers, and watchers. Part lecture, part demonstration, and all conversation, everyone is engaged in watching, asking, and listening. Plans are made for rejoining in the spring 2009.	 450 SUDOKU  470 DAVID TRIO (PRE-DIRT SNAP)  510 ANDREW EARLY DUET  610 GRAND MASH UP 3 LINES 3 DIRECTORS
JANUARY 2008	Amy embarks on a new vein of TOC research with Nichole, Niki, and Christina. HDT receives funding from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through Dance Advance for <i>Unbraiding</i>, to continue research with TOC in 2009.	 200 STARTING POINTS  800 AMY GOGGLE TRIO
FEBRUARY 2008	David rehearses <i>Dirt Snap</i> with Nichole, Kate, Devynn, Christina, and Jaamil, which premieres at Bryn Mawr College dance faculty concert. Andrew and Kate develop a Dance Theater Camp boat based on the work with TOC.	 570 CHOREOGRAPHY & POWDER  820 DIRT SNAP BMC CONCERT

MARCO O'CONNOR

Artistic research in the TOC vein with a trio of women

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WHAT IS THIS? TIMELINE

DATE:

NOTES:

JUMP:

MARCH 2008

Amy continues rehearsing in the TOC vein with a trio of women.



250
CHOREOGRAPHY



870
INVESTIGATION HIGHWAY

APRIL 2008

2008 edition of Dance Theater Camp is held with Andrew and Kate's TOC workshops.



290
ANDREW SOLO VERSION A



300
STRUCTURE-TOPICAL

2008 AND BEYOND

Following the first phase of this work, the company's interest in working with TOC continued and was bolstered by a second grant from [The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage](#) through [Dance Advance](#). Phase II of the company work commenced in the fall of 2008 when each co-director created an individual dance that premiered on a showing in April 2009 moderated by TOC. The company's artistic iteration from this phase will culminate in performances at the 2009 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival.

There were also other ways in which the project resonated after the first phase ended: David created a dance at the [American Dance Festival](#) in 2008; the dancers who participated in the initial project integrated many of the TOC tools into their dancemaking practices in a variety of projects;



100
LINES OF RESEARCH



780
MOST LIBERATING



850
WHAT HAS STUCK



860
TERE TOOLBOX

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There were also other ways in which the project resonated after the first phase ended: David created a dance at the [American Dance Festival](#) in 2008; the dancers who participated in the initial project integrated many of the TOC tools into their dancemaking practices in a variety of projects; Andrew taught some of Tere's analytical viewing techniques to students at the [Headlong Performance Institute](#); and Byron began a year-long video documentary following this process.



100

LINES OF RESEARCH



780

MOST LIBERATING



850

WHAT HAS STUCK



860

TERE TOOLBOX

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WHAT IS THIS? THE ASSIGNMENTS



SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2007

BEGINNING WORKSHOPS:

Listening & Articulation.
Dancemaking Manifesto (or Blah Blah Blahs...)
Dance Meditation Practice.
Lots and lots of conversation.
Make a phrase to show.
Become the audience in rehearsal: projecting, non-denotative, staying open.
Valentine Dances: To→From→To→From.
Learning of new vocabulary (see [Lexicon](#)).



NOVEMBER 2007

MIDDLE WORKSHOPS:

Phrase: same starting material (starter dough) and see where you take it.
Continued lines of research—more and more iterations taken from the last version.
Make the dogs—it's OK for it to suck. Learn to have a space where you don't need to answer to anyone else or feel pressure to make something that starts with an image for the postcard.
Analyzing movement. Tell us what you SEE not what you like.
Dancers brought into process to realize lines of research.
Continued discussion.
Dance Meditation as a group.
Architecture Exercise: describe the wall.



DECEMBER 2007

END WORKSHOPS:

Directors continue working with set groups and developing, mining material.
Why is this important to dance—why is dance the medium you're using to explore this?
Wrecking the Dance—each director takes over in succession.
Slamming two similar lines of research together.
First attempt at braiding three works together.
Public showing of work.

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WHAT IS THIS? OUR LEXICON

Throughout this process Headlong learned new words each day from Tere's extensive and inventive lexicon, and the company also created some of its own terminology.

These are words that you won't likely find in Webster's, yet they are on our tongues and have become the vernacular tied to this dance research work. Somewhat in jest, but with the authenticity of any hybrid language, we offer these definitions.

All of Me

An exercise that Headlong started as a way of learning to see and remember—aspiring to the personality of the dance rather than a faithful choreographic regurgitation. One dancer moves in front of a partner for a few minutes. This can be a simple dance, warming up, finding the body's urges. The dancer finishes, and the witness *becomes* the other dancer, attempting to completely inhabit that body's tendencies, rhythm, sense of weight, and impulses. The goal is not to duplicate the movement vocabulary of the first dancer, but rather to step completely into another's body and dancing. Discussion may follow about what was seen and experienced.

All of Me Variation

A group of witnesses watch the first dancer then all become her. One huge challenge we have begun to explore is going beyond individuals moving like the first dancer. Instead, we ask: what is the *choreography* of that body? How can a group of movers manifest the dancer in the space, through juxtaposition, relationship, and layering? This feels related to Tere's proposal that choreography communicates through what it puts in proximity, that a dance's it-ness comes from structure, not vocabulary.

Bracketing

Choreographers don't often make a piece linearly from start to finish, but add and delete elements—much like using text editors when writing. What happens if you slice a few lines or moments from one phrase and inject them into the next? Can you choreograph a parenthetical comment? *Bracketing* is an editing style and a way of commenting within a work about the work or something tangential.

Choreography

The process and art of making (truly crafting) dances. This is not to be confused with dancing—the

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Choreography

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Congratulation

This is what most of us are consciously or unconsciously striving for as we work in the studio. "Hmmm....We could do the phrase facing upstage or facing stage right. Which one will get me more congratulation at the end of the process?" Competition is part of the fundamental syntax of our culture, and it insinuates itself into the studio. We try to constantly turn our attention from "What is coolest?" to "What is the research?"

Dance Meditation

Tere takes time each day to do what he describes as his dance meditation. In short, he sits and thinks choreographically. It could be something that he saw on the street that stuck with him, or maybe it is the piece that he saw at Dance Theater Workshop in New York the night before. He might look at the objects on his table and see them as choreography. This is thirty minutes of time-based, spatial thought. The only rule is that you can't use it to get ready for a rehearsal. This is separate from rehearsal prep, more like meditating than problem-solving. He asked us to do this as well—to take some time away each day and dedicate it to not moving the muscles but rather moving the mind.

Dislodging

This is about remembering that when you are showing a dance for feedback, either in the studio as part of the lines of research structure or at a talkback session, it is not a focus group. You do not need to synthesize the many opinions or perspectives. All that matters is the one thing that is provoked or dislodged in you that allows you to get back to work. Listen and sift patiently through the discussion of

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Grammar of the Dance

See topical vs. structural below.

It-ness

What is at the heart of what you are seeing? What makes this different from all other dances? In particular, can you zoom out, seeing this dance from a distance, allowing you to name what is *structurally* at the heart of it? It-ness strives to avoid evaluation ("I really liked the part where...") and interpretation ("I saw a woman who is on the verge of some huge action..."). This last part is extremely challenging: try to be precise about what you are seeing without imposing an external story or image. What things are put next to each other in this dance? This can help us see the obvious, the distinctive layers of the dance that can be so close to the artist that she never sees it. That is one goal of naming it-ness: to identify the choreographer's interests that are so present they are overlooked. Frequently we are so consumed by the formal questions of choreography that we never say the things that are the most important to us out loud.

There are many it-nesses, even many penetrating, brilliant it-nesses, for any given work. Of particular interest are it-nesses that can apply across many dimensions of performance. A choreographer might use it-nesses—e.g., erasing, excess, misarranging—to generate movement, provoke spatial ideas,

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These are words that you won't likely find in Webster's, yet they are on our tongues and have become the vernacular tied to this dance research work. Somewhat in jest, but with the authenticity of any hybrid language, we offer these definitions.

use it-nesses—e.g., erasing, excess, misarranging—to generate movement, provoke spatial ideas, identify relationships, or describe design elements. For the artist, all that matters in any conversation about it-ness-naming is the provocation that allows and excites her to get back to work. You don't have to hit it out of the park with each it-ness; they are often simple namings (e.g. density, retroactive). Over time, the artists' unspoken interests will sift through the it-nesses, distinguishing those that matter from those that don't.

Line of Research

A dance experiment, made from the most pressing interest of the choreographer. The first iteration comes from a short movement phrase of any variety. The second iteration remains part of the line, using the most salient point of interest from the original dough as the start. A Line of Research will have multiple iterations, with the first and last often looking quite different.

Ongoingness/Ongoingnessification

Sometimes verbal language intrudes on our physical learning. By continuing to move, and not stopping to analyze with words, it is possible to get to a different understanding of a dance. Is it possible to dance your way through the section that seems "off" or "bad" and into a new place of ease?

Oprahtic

An Oprahtic statement is one that generally appeals to the mass demographic—much in the same way that the talk show hostess Oprah Winfrey is universally known and loved. This can be a verbal or physical statement.

Powder

The analogy of blowing powder on the invisible structure of the piece came up quite often in our sessions. Like suspicious parents spraying their children's rooms to detect a drug trace, this analogy

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The analogy of blowing powder on the invisible structure of the piece came up quite often in our sessions. Like suspicious parents spraying their children's rooms to detect a drug trace, this analogy was employed to identify what is lurking below the surface of the movement, often overshadowed by other topical information. Spraying powder over some part of a dance that has taken on invisibility also helps us to see. The powder suddenly reveals the shape of the object.

Purveyors of Meaning

See [Tere O'Connor article](#).

Time

According to Tere time comes in four ways: real, imagined, metered, and narrative. Is it possible to look at the work—the dance, the piece, the movement—through the lenses of these four dimensions of time; to examine how each of these elements unfolds and at what rate?

Topical vs. Structural

In looking at a dance or phrase we will ask: what are the bones of the dance? Is it structure or is it topical? Topical is about accessories. If you removed all of the surface information, and boiled it down what would the dance be about? Without the easy things to point at, like costume and gender and pirouettes, can you see the politics in the piece that reside below the surface?

Tube of Paint

This phrase speaks to the reality of dance artists being both the tube of paint—the physical medium or the movers—and the painter—the visual artist or choreographer. As makers and performers of dance, the artists' bodies are both the vehicles for inventing *and* demonstrating.

Weather of the Dance

The general feeling or climate that a piece possesses; a combination of *mise-en-scène*, the gut

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Weather of the Dance

The general feeling or climate that a piece possesses; a combination of *mise-en-scène*, the gut reading or intuitive response of the viewer, and the vibe or sensibility that a dance is conveying.

Wrecking the Dance

This exercise is one in which a person with no previous creative hand in making a dance watches and then reshapes another person's dance. For example, David makes a dance and Amy then "works on" David's dance in response. Andrew then reshapes Amy's dance. This is a visual conversation where the back and forth is through the manipulation of movement rather than through a verbal exchange.

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TRYING IT AT HOME: SEEING & ARTICULATING

This exercise is about stating the obvious. It is one we learned through observing a building's architecture, and then applied it to what we see in looking at movement.

This exercise is best done with a few people, though you can do it alone. Pick a wall to look at in your apartment or studio. Name an it-ness of the wall: what makes it distinct from other walls, particularly in terms of structure? There may be components to the wall that reveal themselves as vertical rather than horizontal, the window might take up a third of the space, or perhaps you notice patterns in the paint that coincide with ripples on the floor. There may be an it-ness that relates to color, one that concerns depth, and one concerning materials. Continue describing as directly as possible and let your friends or colleagues do the same to see how many ways you can identify the thing you are looking at. This exercise is easier when the "thing" is a known object, and more challenging when the "thing" is a living breathing dance. Absorbing this technique can help keep your language from getting florid or describing an intention in the movement rather than an it-ness when you move on to the next exercise, [Lines of Research](#).



Headlong's studio at The Parlor

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TRYING IT AT HOME: LINES OF RESEARCH

The choreographer can discover formal interests through the process of initiating multiple lines of research. Long-standing obsessions that are invisible to the artist may surface.

Start with a simple phrase of movement. Any movement will do. Learn it. Do it. Now find what is most interesting, evocative, or just curious about it. Start from there. Find that move or part or juxtaposition that interests you in the movement—is it timing? The part when you go backwards? Or is it the way that your eyebrows move in sync with your elbow each time? Now begin there—with that question or element or issue. Make a new dance that dives into that aspect, investigates this interest. Perform the new dance. You, and any others present, can name the it-ness of it. Take whatever is provoked or dislodged in you by performing it and naming the it-ness and proceed to initiate another line of research.

Eventually, you can look back at your progression—each iteration in your line of research. We don't call these iterations drafts because we're not editing in the way that literature works by deleting or adding words, or by making a parenthetical comment. We continue to repeat the exercise in order to see where it is that we've arrived. In this way, the dance demonstrates to the choreographer what it is about rather than the choreographer dictating what the dance will become.



Andrew Simonet & dancers in performance at First Friday, photo Martin Brown

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Amy Smith, Andrew Simonet, and David Brick have been making dances in Philadelphia as part of Headlong Dance Theater since 1993, working with an evolving group of generous collaborators. Collectively this workbook chronicles Headlong's interrogation of the nature of making dances that the company initiated in 2007 with choreographer Tere O'Connor, artistic director of Tere O'Connor Dance in New York City.

These participant profiles provide insight into the individual creative lives of those who participated in this project and speak to how Tere assisted in blowing open participants' minds—and bodies—in catalyzing, provoking, or refreshing ways Headlong thinks about making dances.



DAVID
BRICK



ANDREW
SIMONET



AMY
SMITH



NICHOLE
CANUSO



NIKI
COUSINEAU



DEVYNN
EMORY



JAAMIL
OLAWALE KOSOKO



KATE
WATSON-WALLACE



CHRISTINA
ZANI



TERE
O'CONNOR



ANNA
DROZDOWSKI



BYRON
KARABATSOS



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DAVID BRICK, CO-DIRECTOR, HEADLONG DANCE THEATER



David Brick, co-director of Headlong Dance Theater, began his professional dancing life as a company member for the Richard Bull Dance Theatre. Seminal relationships in his artistic life include studying with Deborah Hay, dancing for and teaching with Ishmael Houston Jones, years of performing for Nichole Canuso, and various collaborations with Dan Rothenberg and Pig Iron Theatre Company. He received an Independence Foundation Fellowship in 2005 and in 2006 was named a Pew Fellow in the Arts. In 2008 he was a guest artist in Princeton University's Atelier program where he conceived and co-directed *Wind-Up*, a choreographic play inspired by the writings of Haruki Murakami and Tim O'Brien. Brick is currently on the faculty of the American Dance Festival as well as Bryn Mawr College where he has taught dance composition since 1998.

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DAVID'S SOURCE MATERIAL

JUMP:



20
FREAKS



820
DIRT SNAP BMC CONCERT

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ANDREW SIMONET, CO-DIRECTOR, HEADLONG DANCE THEATER

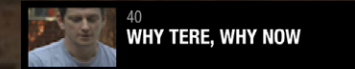


Andrew Simonet is a co-director of Headlong Dance Theater. His current artistic interests include participating in performance pieces like *Thrash* and *The Instructions Project*, and Making Things Harder for the Audience in works like *Pusher* and *Cell*. Simonet founded the Dance Program at The Lawrenceville School in Lawrenceville, New Jersey and directed it for ten years. Since 2006, he has run Artists U, a grassroots planning and professional development program for performing artists in Philadelphia supported by Leveraging Investments in Creativity (LINC), Pew Fellowships in the Arts, and Stockton Rush Bartol Foundation. Simonet was also a recipient of a Pew Fellowship in the Arts award in 2006. He writes occasionally on dance and performance for danceinsider.com.

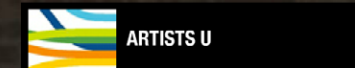
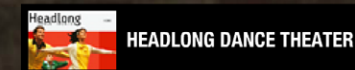
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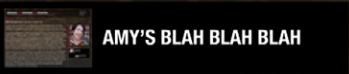
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AMY SMITH, CO-DIRECTOR, HEADLONG DANCE THEATER



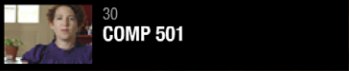
Amy Smith, a co-director of Headlong Dance Theater, grew up in Ann Arbor, Michigan, where she studied ballet, jazz, and tap. At Wesleyan University she studied modern dance, composition, improvisation, ballet, Bharata Natyam, and Ghanaian dance, and majored in religion. After college, Smith spent a year at the Center for New Dance Development in The Netherlands, where she soaked up European new dance studying with Stephanie Skura, Ishmael Houston Jones and Steve Paxton. Important teachers/mentors include Cynthia Novack and Richard Bull, Susan Foster, Deborah Hay, and Ann Trenka. She serves on the Dance/USA board of Trustees, and helped to create Dance/USA Philadelphia. Smith, who lives with a rock-and-roll musician husband and two children in a geodesic dome in the southern New Jersey woods, loves the way Headlong embraces the many-layered lives of its co-directors.

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AMY'S BLAH BLAH BLAH

JUMP:



30
COMP 501



800
AMY GOGGLE TRIO

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NICHOLE CANUSO, PERFORMER



Nichole Canuso, artistic director of Nichole Canuso Dance Company, has been a company member of Headlong Dance Theater since 1997. She has also performed and collaborated with Pig Iron Theatre Company, Theater Exile, and Group Motion Dance Company in Philadelphia, and co-directed Moxie dance collective from 1999-2004. Recently Canuso performed with Bill Irwin in *The Happiness Lecture* at the Philadelphia Theater Company. She has received fellowship support from the Bessie Schoenberg First Light Commission, The Leeway Foundation, the Independence Foundation, The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through Dance Advance, and the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. In August 2009 she was choreographer in residence at Maggie Allessee National Center for Choreography, working on her next project, *TAKES*, which will premiere at the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival in 2010.

JUMP:



380

ALL OF ME VERSION 2



760

AMY GOGGLE PHRASE

ELSEWHERE:



NICHOLE CANUSO
DANCE COMPANY

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NIKI COUSINEAU, PERFORMER



Niki Cousineau is in her sixth season with Headlong Dance Theater, with which she has appeared in *Cell*, *Explanatorium*, and *Shosha*, among other dances. She is also the co-director of Subcircle, a company she founded with Jorge Cousineau in 1998. A 2007 Pew Fellow in the Arts recipient, Cousineau has received numerous grants from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through Dance Advance, the Independence Foundation and Pennsylvania Council on the Arts. From site-specific and installation performances such as *Banking Hours* and *Still Unknown* to works for the stage that include *Just Between Me*, *Crevice*, and *Somewhere Close to Now*, Subcircle's work has been performed in Germany in Potsdam, Berlin, Dresden, and at the International Theater Research Center Schloss Broellin. Subcircle's dance film *HERE* was part of the exhibition *Lucid Dreaming* at the Michener Art Museum.

JUMP:

280

DANCER RESEARCH

790

AMY REHEARSAL

ELSEWHERE:

SUBCIRCLE

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DEVYNN EMORY, PERFORMER



Devynn Emory is a Philadelphia-based choreographer and a 2009 Fresh Tracks Resident Artist at Dance Theater Workshop in New York. Emory was a 2003 New Edge Mix participant at Community Education Center, a three-year participant in the Susan Hess Choreographers Project at Susan Hess Modern Dance (SHMD), and has received an Independence Foundation Fellowship. Ongoing projects include curating the annual 48-hour dance project at SHMD, making dance films, and choreographing music videos for the band Plastic Little. Emory/Beast Production has shown work in the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, the Motion Pictures series of Philadelphia Dance Projects, Brooklyn Arts Exchange (BAX), Movement Research, and Dance New Amsterdam in New York. Devynn Emory/Beast Productions will present *Helmet* as part of the 2009 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival.

JUMP:



350

ANDREW TRIO



510

ANDREW EARLY DUET

ELSEWHERE:



BEAST PRODUCTIONS

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JAAMIL OLAWALE KOSOKO, PERFORMER



Jaamil Olawale Kosoko, artistic director and founder of KOSOKO perFORMance GROUP, is a choreographer, poet, and interdisciplinary performance artist who creates dance theater environments that fuse original text, media, and theatrical elements. He is a recipient of the 2006-2007 New Edge Residency at Community Education Center and was awarded 2009 project funding from The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage through Dance Advance for the forthcoming dance theater piece *An Expectation of Violence*. In June 2009 he premiered VIRUS (aka TRACE/maneuver) as part of his 2009 nEW Festival Residency. Kosoko is a program associate for Dance/USA Philadelphia and a contributing writer for the *Broad Street Review*.

JUMP:



320
AMY INTRO



610
**GRAND MASH UP
3 LINES 3 DIRECTORS**

ELSEWHERE:



**KOSOKO /
PERFORMANCE GROUP**

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KATE WATSON-WALLACE, PERFORMER



Kate Watson-Wallace, a choreographer and performer based in Philadelphia, directs anonymous bodies, an interdisciplinary performance company. Projects include *CAR*, a performance for four passengers in the back seat of a moving car, *HOUSE*, a show inside a row home, and *STORE*, a performance piece about American greed. She has been presented at the Philadelphia Live Arts Festival, ODC in San Francisco, Velocity Dance in Seattle, Joyce SoHo in New York City, Bryn Mawr College, and DanceBoom! Festival in Philadelphia. Watson-Wallace is a 2007 Pew Fellow in the Arts recipient. She has been a guest artist at The University of the Arts, Franklin and Marshall College, Temple University, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She has danced with Headlong Dance Theater in *Brittney's Inferno*, *Hotel Pool*, *Cell*, and *Chicago*.

JUMP:



340
AMY DIAGONAL TRIO



450
SUDOKU

ELSEWHERE:



KWW / ANONYMOUS BODIES

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CHRISTINA ZANI, PERFORMER



Christina Zani is a dance artist who has worked with Headlong Dance Theater for four years, appearing in *Cell*, *Explanatorium*, *Hotel Pool*, *Michigan*, and many First Friday experiments. As a dancemaker, she creates small works that can travel light. In 2005, Zani was an artist in residence at the Atlantic Center for the Arts, under the mentorship of Douglas Dunn. That residency gave birth to the solo *abun/dance*, which was performed at the Philly Fringe Festival, AUNTS in New York City, The Far Space, and the New Haven Festival of Arts and Ideas. As a resident artist of Mascher Space Co-op in Philadelphia, she has made the duets *headpiece* and *me and je try three*, as well as hosted *Drozzani*, an evening of performance. Zani is working on a project for 15 performers, to take place at Philadelphia's 30th Street Station in November 2009. Since moving to Philadelphia she has also worked with Lisa Kraus, Tania Isaac, and Workshop for Potential Movement.

JUMP:



370
ALL OF ME



470
DAVID TRIO
(PRE-DIRT SNAP)

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TERE O'CONNOR, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, TERE O'CONNOR DANCE



Tere O'Connor has been making dances since 1982 and has created over 35 works for his company, Tere O'Connor Dance, which has performed throughout the U.S. and in Europe, South America, and Canada. O'Connor has been commissioned by numerous dance companies both in this country and internationally, including the Lyon Opera Ballet; White Oak Dance Project; de Rotterdamse Dansgroep, Holland; Carte Blanche, Norway; TRAF0/The Workshop Foundation, Hungary; for Canadian dancers Bill Coleman and Laurence Lemieux in Montreal; Dance Alloy in Pittsburgh, PA; and Zenon Dance Company in Minneapolis, MN. In addition to his 1996 work *Greta in a Ditch* for the White Oak Dance Project, he recently created a new solo work for Mikhail Baryshnikov.

A 1993 Guggenheim Fellow, O'Connor is also the recipient of a Foundation for Contemporary Performance Art Award and Arts International's DNA Project Award. He has received three New York Dance and Performance "Bessie" Awards, in 1998 for *Heaven Up North*, in 1999 for Sustained Achievement, and most recently for his work *Frozen Mommy* (2005). He is also a recipient of multiple grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, New York State Council on the Arts, The New York Foundation for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation/MAP Fund, NEFA/National Dance Project, Jerome Foundation, Altria Group, Inc., Bossak/Heilbron Charitable Foundation, The Harkness Foundation for Dance, and Arts International: The Fund for US Artists at International Festivals.

As a teacher, O'Connor served as a ballet instructor at New York

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10
LESS DEMOCRACY



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TERE O'CONNOR, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, TERE O'CONNOR DANCE



As a teacher, O'Connor served as a ballet instructor at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts for nine years. A much sought-after teacher, he has also taught at the Bates Dance Festival, American Dance Festival, Colorado Dance Festival, Ohio State University, University of Minnesota, Arizona State University, University of Illinois, at the School for New Dance Development (The Netherlands), and Tanzwochen (Austria), among others. He is currently a professor at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign.

About Tere O'Connor Dance

Filtered through a rigorously personal and philosophical lens, Tere O'Connor's radical reinvention of the formal conceits of concert dance distinguish him as a truly original presence in the dance world. The bewitching, illusory worlds he creates on stage are richly textured, disturbingly beautiful, and often darkly humorous. These deftly crafted works are inhabited by his unique physical language, which employs the history of dance as a metaphor for human emotional range and repositions its referential world to speak of themes outside of dance. He has developed a complex movement vocabulary—eclectic and innovative—a self-contained lexicon from which his themes are defined.

His works, which explore a stark emotional territory, are inherently political. They cast an eye on contemporary society and human behavior and question the choices of civilization as to how it will live. These deeply moving and entertaining dances contain a potent, restorative strain of

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TERE O'CONNOR, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR, TERE O'CONNOR DANCE



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His works, which explore a stark emotional territory, are inherently political. They cast an eye on contemporary society and human behavior and question the choices of civilization as to how it will live. These deeply moving and entertaining dances contain a potent, restorative strain of theatrical idealism. They imagine alternative choices, unrealized by history, as a corrective poetry—quietly railing against the standardization of human beings. O'Connor's boldly individualist approach to choreography has contributed new thought to the form and resonates throughout its theoretical discourse.

O'Connor is presently engaged in a deliberate detachment from narrative with a desire to shed light on dance as a sub-linguistic area of expression. He is interested in turning the process of each work into content and allowing the works to be born as opposed to calculating them into existence. He looks at dance as an abstract documentary form, using its own systems to record the dynamics of a specific personal/global moment. O'Connor's astounding performers and renowned collaborators constitute a family of artists, together for over twenty years, who are dedicated to expanding the potency of dance as a serious art form for our time.

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ANNA DROZDOWSKI, DOCUMENTER



Anna Drozdowski, production manager and strategic planner, managed Headlong Dance Theater from 2005-2009. She was the documentarian during Phase I of the Braiding/Unbraiding/Rebraiding project. Past work includes management for Artists U, Nichole Canuso Dance Company (NCDC) and Team Office!, The School of American Ballet, The Parlor, and the United Auto Workers. Drozdowski has written critically about the Royal Danish Ballet and Dada von Bzdülow, and contributed to the *Philadelphia Weekly*, *The Bournonville Daily*, and *The Boston Globe*. She has received fellowships from the Deutscher Akademischer Austausch Dienst (DAAD, or German Academic Exchange Service), the Fulbright Program, and the NEA Arts Journalism Program at the American Dance Festival, she is also a grantee of the Chicago Seminar on Dance and Performance. In 2009-2010 Drozdowski will be a Pennsylvania Commonwealth Speaker, Community Education Center New Edge Mix artist, Dance/USA Philadelphia advisor, dramaturg, writer, and guest curator for Philadelphia Dance Projects.

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BYRON KARABATSOS, VIDEOGRAPHER



Byron Karabatsos is a Philadelphia video/filmmaker. His short films have been screened and won awards at several domestic and international festivals, including the 10th Annual Sarasota Film Festival, the 30th annual Big Muddy Film Festival, the 25th annual Denver International Film Festival, the 2008 Maryland Film Festival and San Francisco's Short Film Festival. He has received grants from Philadelphia's Independent Film and Video Association (PIFVA), Temple University, and Microsoft Corporation. In addition to making films, Karabatsos has collaborated with Philadelphia companies Tania Isaac Dance (*Standpipe*), the Reactionaries (*Shines When the Sunshine Shifts*), and Nichole Canuso Dance Company in *Wandering Alice* at the 2008 Philadelphia Live Arts Festival. Karabatsos teaches film production, editing, screenwriting and theory courses at Temple University and The University of the Arts in Philadelphia.

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HEADLONG DANCE THEATER EXAMINES ARTISTIC PROCESS IN COLLABORATION WITH TERE O'CONNOR

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HEADLONG DANCE THEATER



A Short History of Headlong Dance Theater

Headlong Dance Theater was founded by co-directors David Brick, Andrew Simonet and Amy Smith in 1993. David, Andrew and Amy collaborate in the creation and performance of all Headlong's dances and share credit for all the company's work. Their core dancers, especially Nichole Canuso, who has been with Headlong since 1996, contribute significantly to the creative process, as do the other dancers with whom they work with on a project basis.

Over the years headlong has created over forty dances, many of which are known for their witty take on contemporary culture. Drawing both on the movement backgrounds of the ensemble as well as movement directions suggested by research on a particular piece, Headlong develops a movement vocabulary for each new work. Since 2004 Headlong has included dance dramaturgy as a formal part of its research process. Mark Lord as company dramaturg has played an important role in the research and development of Headlong's choreography ideas. Typically, Headlong creates movement vocabularies that both reflect and comment on the subject matter they are exploring.

Headlong organizes and hosts Dance Theater Camp, a month-long dance theater festival for professional artists, free to all participants. The emphasis is on hybrid work: physical theater, dance theater, movement-based performance. Artists teach classes and workshops, collaborate in the creation of new work, and critique work at weekly open showings.

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David, Andrew, and Amy were inspired by the work of [Richard Bull](#) and [Cynthia Novack](#) early in their careers, and Headlong continues to practice choreographic improvisation in the studio and on stage. Many of the company's dances include or consist entirely of structured improvisation. Headlong has performed nationally and internationally for a range of audiences, and their work—informed by a deep commitment to collaboration, humor, and experimentation—has won many fans and much acclaim.

"Does experimental dance have to be intimidating? Not according to Headlong Dance Theater, which likes to lace its cerebral offerings with sly humor...Headlong is clearly not your typical dance company, with dances in keeping with the troupe's motto that intelligent experimentation can be compelling and, in some cases, hilarious."

—*Gia Kourlas, New York Times, March 24, 2002*

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