

Our Intentions

Our main concern was to empower the Dancewebbers through a critical and physical engagement throughout the festival, aiming to expand and contextualize their individual artistic and performative approaches in the fields of contemporary dance and choreography.

We considered it important to accompany the group and to support them developing trust and curiosity in the intuitive dimension of process, so as to be capable of formulating a unique voice in this vital and vibrating field of performing arts.

We talked a lot about creating opportunities for the participants to meet each other as people and not only as professional artists. We wanted to avoid that in meeting each other, participants immediately made judgements about 'good' or 'bad' or 'I like' or "I don't like."

We used our intro days to present our artistic works. We also speak about some of our intentions for the Dancewebbers. We were three mentors, so we could also establish a shared dialogue amongst ourselves and with the Dancewebbers about our different interests and concerns.

How we selected participants

- looking for people who create possibilities for others in their home communities
- social mission or some feeling of responsibility towards their local scene
- not only artists from Europe
- special consideration for applicants from the Middle East and Africa, or countries under occupation
- looking particularly for those with a strong sense of mission about their work, not merely an ambition towards the dance field, but also an ambition towards the broader culture
- particular interest in applicants from outside of the usual Western European dance educations -

How we structured the weeks

- We intended to make ourselves available in the most flexible, non-prescriptive way possible. We decided on some version of 'meeting hours' -- not-mandatory opportunities for the Webbers to come to meet us, to talk about anything on their minds. It could be about their own professional or artistic questions, any personal issues that they wanted to share, questions about our work, or anything else that occurred to them.

- Each of the three of us offered several of these 'meeting hours' a week. Mette and Annie split between Arsenal and Museumsquartier.
 - Anne proposed several meetings (individual, and in a smaller group) in her studio at Pernerstorfergasse,5 where everyone could gather and talk or exchanges practices. Anne also organised several private and collective choreographic sessions in her studio for the group. It felt essential to have a place where the Dancewebber could meet more informally.

Assessment - How did it go

- We had the impression that some of the participants would have liked more opportunities to show their work earlier --
- Nowadays we face many different cultural and political crisis, the moment of the festival these tensions arise, and problems can occur, we met some tension -- some political and cultural debates arose. It was, on the whole, a positive thing to encounter these issues and discuss them. DanceWeb is also a place for that.

Overall we were very impressed by the group and their capacity to create good exchanges and excellent dynamics among themselves. There was an enormously supportive atmosphere amongst the DanceWebbers, a very little interpersonal conflict that we see, and overall we had the feeling that the participants were learning as much from each other as from other parts of the program.

We felt that was the right decision that they presented their work to each other later, in the final wrap up days, rather than right at the beginning. We do feel that we, therefore, avoided a situation of competition between them -- it was a very positive thing for their group composition that they got to know each other before seeing each other's work.

What do we suggest for DanceWeb next time

It could have been nice for the mentors to have some possibility to invite speakers or guests.

Possibly the mentor could propose external intervention, to create some opportunities for dialogues with other thinkers or artists relevant to our work - and to their interests. Then the discussion amongst the DanceWebbers would be not only in reaction to the festival's aesthetics or politics but also about broader concerns.

We value the educational places where there is a possibility for not only peers. Some outside interventions might offer other frames or ways to look at the works and the whole experience.

The festival could communicate in advance whom they invite that we can create links -- take more opportunity to meet artists that are already there, for the Webbers to have a bit more

interaction and exchanges with the dancers, choreographers, artistes and teachers present during the festival.

Generally, we had a very good experience at the festival. There's not so much that we would propose to change. There are so much history and experience with the program -- overall it works well. We think that the most important is to create a group that is good with each other, which can grow together and keep contact even after the summer to keep opening ways to experience dance practices and choreography.

Anne Juren and Annie Dorsen (October 2019)