Dance as Radical Archaeology

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A Dancer Writes: Dance as Radical Archaeology

Marie-Louise Crawley

Abstract: This essay examines from an artist-researcher perspective the durational solo dance work, *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, created for and performed at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology (UK) in 2018. It asks how dance's presence in the archaeological museum might allow an alternative visibility for ancient female bodies previously rendered only partially visible by history. It makes a claim for dance in the archaeological museum as a subversive act of radical archaeology, in terms of how, by playing on notions of dismembering/remembering histories, it seeks to disrupt received notions of how we view and understand ancient history and culture.

Keywords: Choreography, archaeology, ancient history, classics, memory, museum, feminism

(**insert Photo 1 before the Introduction)**

Introduction: Dancing in the Archaeological Museum

This article examines from an artist-researcher perspective the durational solo dance work, *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*, that I created for and performed at the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology, Oxford (UK) in April 2018[1]. This work emerged as a key part of a wider practice-as-research project probing shifting experiences

of temporality when choreography "performs" as museum exhibit[2]. The project asked how we might consider the live female dancer in the archaeological museum as a counter-archive or, to use performance theorist Rebecca Schneider's reworking of philosopher Michel Foucault's term, as a site of "counter-memory" (Schneider 2011, 105). How might dance's presence in the museum allow an alternative visibility, a hyper-visibility, for those ancient female bodies previously rendered invisible - or, only partially visible - by history? Furthermore, how might the presence of the live female dancer in the museum allow certain buried female histories to surface and be "re-collected", becoming - through performance - part of the museum's collection (at least, temporarily)? By unpicking these questions here, I aim to make a claim for dance in the archaeological museum itself as a potentially subversive act of what I term "radical archaeology," both in terms of how it plays on notions of dismembering and remembering histories, and how it seeks to disrupt received notions of how we view and understand ancient history and culture.

Dance in the art museum in the UK and continental Europe is once again in the choreographic zeitgeist, with major events such as French choreographer Boris Charmatz's *Musée de la danse* (*Dancing Museum*), and Belgian choreographer Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker's *Work / Travail / Arbeid*, both at Tate Modern, London (UK), in 2015 and 2016 respectively, as select examples among many [3] and with dance scholarship reflecting this.[4] However, while the practice of dance in the art museum seems to be enjoying exponential growth, as does the scholarship on it, dancing in the museum of ancient history and archaeology seems a rare phenomenon, at least in the UK[5]. There are historical antecedents for it: we might think of the pioneers of modern

dance in the early twentieth-century such as Isadora Duncan (c.1877-1927) working in the British Museum, for example – but why dance in the archaeological museum today? Such was my question as I embarked upon the creation and performance of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* at the Ashmolean Museum.

"*Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)"*

This durational work, performed over two weeks in April 2018 throughout the opening hours of the museum (10am-5pm), was composed of four dance fragments. I performed each of the four solos – subtitled Galatea, Myrrha, Philomela and Medusa – in the signature glass windows and bridges that connect the Ashmolean's galleries. The performances viewed behind glass thereby offered a visual echo of the glass vitrines enclosing ancient artefacts throughout the museum. The dance was juxtaposed against the museum's other representations of female histories - in the surrounding marble sculptures, fixed in pigment on frescoes and ancient vases, and more strikingly and shockingly still, in the physical remains of the exhibited Romano-Egyptian female mummified bodies. I must pause here to remember the sensations of shock and anger that I felt on an initial site visit to the Ashmolean when I first encountered the female Romano-Egyptian mummies on display in the museum's Ancient Egypt and Nubia galleries. Some of these female "remains" even have mummy portraits, painstakingly restored prior to the Ashmolean's re-display and the five million pounds' Egypt project that brought them out from storage in 2011. The oldest of these portraits, on linen, is of a young woman dating from 55-70 CE: she was excavated by Flinders Petrie (1853-1942)

at the Roman cemeteries of Hawara in Fayum, south west of Cairo, in 1911. However, while this woman's body – and a representation of her face - is undeniably materially present in the Ashmolean, I was struck by how her story, and a sense of who she was, is absent. On seeing her body and the bodies of other "unknown" women on display, I began to ask who these women really were. Similarly, on that same first site visit, as I walked through the museum's gallery 21, the Randolph Greek and Roman Sculpture Gallery, my eyes were drawn towards a marble sculpture of a seated woman. This statue was missing both its head and arms. The label next to her informed me that she is a Roman artifact (50-150CE) and, despite missing the identifiable lyre, is considered to be "likely Terpsichore, the muse of the dance." I was struck by the term "likely" and how the fragmented statue's very identity is defined by what is missing. Significantly, it was the curt descriptive label next to this sculpture that gave the final durational dance-work its title.

Half-exhibit, half dance installation, the four solos were performed in silence (or in the relative, ambient silence of the museum). Galatea, Myrrha, Philomela and Medusa are all female characters from Roman author Ovid's (43BCE-17CE) *Metamorphoses*, a text written contemporaneously to the development of the Roman dance-theatre pantomime form, *tragoedia saltata* ("danced tragedy"), and all four solos take their root in the foundational principles of this ancient form to somehow explore how, in the moment of performance itself, we might reconfigure a (performance) history into something new. The four fragments feature classical heroines whose voices and bodies have been appropriated throughout history (even by Ovid), and aim to reclaim a space in history (and a body in the present) for them. The solos were performed on a loop; as such,

they could be viewed in any order, and, significantly, even partially viewed as fragments. Housed in their glass "display cases," they could also be viewed and re-viewed from different perspectives; from above, from below, close-up or at a distance, the visitor chancing upon the work and choosing to spend as much or as little time with each work as they wished in the same way as they might view another artifact in the museum's collection. In viewing the dance in the museum setting, my aim was that the viewer-spectator somehow "completed" the alternative glimpse of an alternative, female bodily history offered by the dancer's performance. This was further reinforced by the way in which viewers could experience the work in a fragmentary fashion: walking around the museum, they might only see one of the four solos, or they might glimpse short fragments of each, seen from above, below, or face-to-face, close-up or from a distance, the live dancer seen against marble friezes and sculptures, caught in passing. Each viewer might then reassemble the performance's fragments in a different order; putting the pieces back together in a way unique to them; re-collecting the female stories my dance was putting on display through my body in both senses of the word.

We often think of the museum as a temple to memory, as the resting-place of history and as the space in which we come to reflect upon that history, to recollect. Yet the very etymological definition of "museum" is a shrine to the Muses; in my own dance practice in the Ashmolean, the museum is very specifically the shrine to both Clio, the muse of History, and also to Terpsichore, the muse of the Dance (as well as of their seven sisters). When I think of Clio and Terpsichore at play in the archaeological museum, I cannot help but see before me traces of dance scholar Susan Foster's vivid description in *Choreographing History* (1995) of the duet between these two Muses, dressed in their

combat outfits and sneakers, as they enter some sort of choreographic tussle. In Foster's imagination, their sweaty, fleshy duet is a dialogue playing out the tensions, frictions and collisions between the rhetorical body and the dancing body. For Foster, Terpsichore senses "the need to rationalize choreography as persuasive discourse" and Clio realizes "the need to bring movement and fleshiness into historiography" (18). These Muses know their differences, yet they also have an idea of their common strength: the positive force of a coalition emerging from their collision, a coalition to resist and disembody the "tyrant" (18). As I dance in the archaeological museum, I too feel that I am playing out this collision and coalition between Clio and Terpsichore. In a practice that somehow attempts to offer an alternative visibility for those who have been partially buried by history, and of whom only fragments are remaining, the coalition of Clio and Terpsichore together presents a resistance against the looming tyrant of a patrilineal, institutionali~~z~~zed history. These two sister Muses are at work resisting the *status quo* that the museum as a house of authority, of institutionali~~z~~zed power, might represent. However, for me, the picture that Foster paints is itself fragmentary and incomplete. I wish to add a third character, an older (perhaps wiser) figure waiting in the wings, watching and witnessing: Memory. For, lest we forget, the mother of the Muses – and of Clio and Terpsichore - was Mnemosyne, the goddess of memory. It is Memory who births History, it is Memory who births the Dance and it is she who will eventually call them to account.

If we think about the ancient Greek idea of the archive – the *ἀρχεῖον* - as the home of the tyrant who has the power, we might say that the archaeological museum houses the very monuments of history and of collective memory that define who holds the power and who does not. This idea necessarily relies on a definition of a museum as the very

embodiment of historical, cultural heritage. In looking at a museum like the Ashmolean, it is important to keep in mind the high stakes of its history and politics as the UKs oldest museum, and the fact that museums such as the Ashmolean emerged in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as storehouses of collective cultural memory[6]. As such, we might think of the museum as a permanent and static fixture embodying cultural memory (what Diana Taylor (2003) would indeed classify as an archive). Yet, due to the institutional developments brought about by the movement of the "New Museology," [7] museums have gradually become - and are becoming - much more fluid, transient spaces where the historicized past meets the present moment. It is within this framework that performance has entered the museum. In fact, as museology scholar Helen Rees Leahy suggests, it is "the inherent transience and fluidity of performance that confronts the apparent solidity and stasis of the museum" (2011, 28). It is performance, which takes place in the present moment, in all its brokenness and incompleteness, but also in its movement, that challenges the static, frozen quality of the institution. For me, Rees Leahy's suggestion chimes with Foster's description of the battling, moving Muses. Terpsichore challenges Clio to enter the fray which then becomes a dance; and, as Foster suggests, it is this constant movement, this dance, which then resists, challenges and disrupts the authorial stasis of the museum as archive, the house of collective memory.

Writing on museum and heritage theatre, performance and theatre scholar Paul Johnson points to performance in the museum as a potential alternative means of writing history:

> If in the New Museology, […] meaning is socially determined and assigned, then surely history must be written in a similar way, and indeed the museum or

> heritage site is one of the locations where an embodied form of that writing takes place, and so performance itself can be one of the ways of writing. (2011, 58)

While Johnson is here talking about museum theatre, he makes a valid point for what dance performance might also be doing in the archaeological museum. As the writing of the dance, choreography in the museum offers an alternative means of how we might write history. Yet it also offers an alternative means of how we might read history too, and how we might view it. I would like to focus now on exactly how dance performance does this, in relation to the ideas of the monumental (the solid, static objects of collective memory, as defined by those holding the power) and the fragmentary.

Indeed, whilst the museum might purport to exhibit the monumental, these monuments are dislocated in time and space: they too are often incomplete and fragmented. We need only think of the Parthenon Marbles housed in the British Museum, and the gaps remaining on the Parthenon, where they originally were; the Marbles are half here and half there, suspended across geographical space as well as across historical time.[8] It is this dislocation and fragmentation that can lend such poignancy to seeing ancient objects on display. Furthermore, as performance studies scholar Jennifer Parker-Starbuck writes, the very nature of their fragmentation has now become an almost *performative* feature of museum exhibition and display:

> A shift toward how collections and objects perform histories, and what the performative curatorial strategies of cultural narratives might signal about these histories, has begun to shape museums very differently. I was, for example, surprisingly moved when I visited the then newly opened Acropolis Museum in

> Athens. Walking through the great hall around the replica of the Acropolis, studying the spaces where the missing Parthenon Marbles belonged as I looked upward at the actual Parthenon on the hill was a surprisingly poignant moment – the missing objects were specifically curated to be as belonging within the gaps in the reconstruction. (Parker-Starbuck 2017, 9)

It is the gaps between the fragments that seem to speak to us across time and space.

In 2017, at the opening symposium of the Kings College London research project "Modern classicisms" which explores the enduring legacy of Greek and Roman visual culture in contemporary art, artist Marc Quinn made a strong case for the classical fragmentary:

> If all classical culture had been perfectly kept, we wouldn't be interested…if it's fragmented, it has time in it. (2017) [9]

Quinn's proposition is a striking one for my own dance explorations. It is the fragmentary that contains time; taking this further, we might say that it is from the fragmentary that time might escape. It is through the gaps between fragments that the past may escape to the present; it is through the fragmentary that the past can speak to the present and, conversely, the present reply to the past. It is through the fragmentary that Clio dances with Terpsichore and, with Mnemosyne as witness to their dancing, they are able to resist the historical *status quo*. It is essential to point out here that I am claiming a positive sense for the fragmentary, particularly in terms of the feminist critical framework[10] underpinning my practice-as-research in the museum.

This idea of the fragmentary, of completing the picture, of putting the pieces back together again, as I asked of my spectators, also speaks to dance scholar Gabriele

Brandstetter's work on the fragmentary nature of performance in the museum as offering an alternative to traditional historiography.[11] Brandstetter (2016) points to how that which she terms the "museum in transition"[12] can serve as a cultural model for restructuring traditional categories of narrative. Following on from Jean-François Lyotard's *La Condition Postmoderne* (1979), Brandstetter posits the "historeme" or the anecdotal or unpublished as a contrast to the *grand récit* (Lyotard's "meta-narrative") and uses dance in the museum, citing re-doings of postmodern dance history in the museum (such as those in French choreographer Boris Charmatz' *Musée de la danse*) to state how performance can challenge critical historiography. Brandstetter suggests that while traditional historiography tells history with a beginning, middle and end, it is performance in the museum that can offer an opportunity for the anecdotal to be revealed, and this precisely because of performance's fragmentary nature. In fact, one of the strongest arguments for including performance within the repertoire of interpretative strategies a museum has at its disposal is that "it provides museums with a resource that helps them fill some of the inevitable gaps in their collections and the narratives that they tell" (Jackson 2011, 21). It is in this recovery of distant, hidden, fragmented and marginalized voices through performance that an attempt can be made to re-present that which is absent.

Dance as Radical Archaeology

Thinking about connections between writing, reading, viewing and dancing history, leads me to highlight the relationship between choreography and archaeology that is central to my practice. I am indebted here to an argument first made by archaeological scholars

Michael Shanks and Christopher Tilley in their seminal text *Re-Constructing Archaeology* ([1987] 1992), and in particular their reading of the archaeologist as some sort of time-traveller navigating between the past (that which is being "re-constructed") and the present (the point at which that re-construction is happening in the here and now). Shanks and Tilley's reading of the archaeologist's relationship with time rests on an understanding of the contrast between history and memory. History, a word containing both a subjective and objective genitive (Ricœur, 1981), is to be regarded both as what has happened and the apprehension of that happening. As such, it does not take place primarily as a past event, that which is gone, for "there is no abstract concept of "event" which exists separately from the practice of apprehending and comprehending the past" (Shanks and Tilley [1987] 1992, 17). As Shanks and Tilley point out, there is no verb corresponding to the noun "history" and the absence of such a verb, "to history," is something that they wish their study to address. There is a related verb – "to remember"; and memory "presumes the active practice of remembering, incorporating past into present; it is a suspension of the subject-object distinction"(17). Furthermore, memory is linked to storytelling, a mnemonic act addressing an audience. Here the archaeologist becomes a "story-teller" (again Shanks and Tilley's term) and the act of remembering the past becomes a performance. Furthermore, it is a performance that does not attempt to construct a coherent continuity, to tell the whole story. Such an attempt would be fruitless, as the past is never fixed, it is forever being re-interpreted, and the hermeneutic re-interpreting is endless:

> The archaeologist may textually cement one piece of the past together but almost before the cement has dried it begins to crack and rot [...] archaeology

> should be conceived as the process of the production of a textual heterogeneity which denies finality and closure; it is a suggestion that archaeologists live a new discursive, practical relation with the past. This relation is one of ceaseless experiment, dislocation, refusal and subversion of the notion that the past can ever be 'fixed' or 'tied down' by archaeologists in the present. It involves an emphasis on the polyvalent qualities of the past always inscribed in the here and now. (Shanks and Tilley [1987] 1992, 20)

Shanks and Tilley's groundbreaking argument has undeniably paved the way for how I consider the choreographer and dancer in the museum to be very similar to the archaeologist. The dancer in the museum is navigating past and present; she is "doing" history, remembering, storytelling; choreography, like archaeology, continually inscribes "the polyvalent qualities of the past" (Shanks and Tilley [1987] 1992, 20) in its present-ness. The relationship between archaeology and performance has emerged as influential on performance theory and practice (Pearson and Shanks 2001) and questions concerning connections between the two disciplines have been addressed at length by Giannachi, Kaye and Shanks (2012). Building on these studies exploring the "negotiations of tenses of place and time" (11) that both archaeology and performance entail, and while not wishing to do a disservice to archaeologists, I would like to suggest that, in such negotiations, dance in the museum perhaps has the power to go even further than archaeology. Dance in the museum is, in a sense, something I have begun to coin as "radical archaeology." Whereas archaeologists aim to survey, excavate and produce texts, and there is rarely recourse to an empathetic (or bodily) understanding of the past, my museum dance practice, aims to communicate the emotions and sensations of women

from the past to its viewers in the present to encourage in them an empathetic, visceral connection to the past. This radical archaeology, that takes place in the *bodies* of both the dancer and the viewer, is a grounding principle behind my dance practice in the museum. Although I am writing from the choreographer-dancer's perspective, and an outline of the "audience's" reception of the work is limited here, it seems clear that the physicality of the dance and the connection that it is able to make with on a visceral, emotional bodily level is significant, in terms of how it might enable a re-viewing of the museum collection, and also a re-thinking of what that collection represents. [13]

The idea of dance as radical archaeology chimes with work currently being proposed in the fields of phenomenology and sensory studies in archaeology[14] and there is indeed some overlap in the field of sensory classical archaeology (e.g. Betts 2017). However, sensory classical Roman archaeology has to date tended to focus on the sonic and the haptic, rather than the kinesthetic. *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* affirms dance practice as a vital and necessary base for inquiry into ancient history, culture and performance. It reflexively speaks back to classical archaeology itself as a sensory, embodied practice and how that practice might meet the museum. Its subversion of the museum's institutional narrativizing points to the nature of dance as an act of radical archaeology, asserting dance not merely as an art object, or educational project to enliven or animate the museum collection, but as an integral element of that collection, and therefore of our understanding of the histories represented within it.

Fragments and Monuments

The archaeological museum is often a repository of fragments of monuments, which are themselves repositories of fragmentary cultural memory. Classicist Helen Lovatt posits that an exploration of the monumental brings together two sides of the gaze, "the powerful and disempowered, subject and object, same and other, male and female, to explore the end result of epic: *the traces that are left behind*" (2013, 347, my emphasis). To illustrate her point, Lovatt uses an episode drawn from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*; that of Perseus, he who slays the snake-haired gorgon Medusa, whose female gaze petrifies anything that dares look it in the eye. This same episode lies at the root of "Medusa," one the four dance fragments of *Likely Terpsichore?* that I created for the Ashmolean.[15] Furthermore, in ~~in~~ her inquiry into how the epic gaze interacts with epic acts of preservation and remembrance (acts that, I would argue, are within the domain of the archaeological museum), Lovatt evokes the indeterminate, elusive gaps in the epic monument (2013, 274). In response to Lovatt, I suggest that live dance in the museum as simultaneously fragmentary and monumental can offer such elusiveness, at least for the fleeting moment of performance.

As Lovatt reminds us, Medusa symbolizes the monstrous-feminine, a figure who has been appropriated by both psychoanalysis and feminism (e.g. Sarton 1971; Cixous 1975; Rimell 2006), a "pin-up for female objectification […] the petrifying image of a mask-like female face […] a synecdoche for women in epic: monster, uncanny, associated with the divine, powerful, at the same time as she is raped, objectified, an object conquered and exchanged by men to give them power" (Lovatt 2013, 356-7). Significantly, classics scholar Mary Beard (2017) points to the decapitated head of

Medusa as a defining image of the radical separation – real, cultural and imaginary - between women and power in Western history: "one of the most potent ancient symbols of male mastery over the destructive dangers that the very possibility of female power represented" (71).[16] Furthermore, the head of Medusa, the gorgon's head, the object held aloft by the victorious Perseus, was itself popularly represented in antiquity on an object known as a *gorgoneion*, an apotropaic amulet. On this object, Medusa's face becomes monument, a visible sign that stimulates an act of remembrance. Author Geoff Dyer describes such historical monuments as "permanent, built to last, [that have] none of the vulnerability of the human body" (Dyer 1995: 127). I wonder how the live, female body in the museum, surrounded by fragmentary monuments, might itself defy Dyer's definition and become monumental through the fragmented dance and through its very vulnerability? Might the Medusa's head one day dance its way through the museum alongside her body?

<Insert Photo 2. here>

"Medusa"

In constructing the choreography of "Medusa" I sought to explore the idea of the ashamed and frightened young woman behind the monstrous apotropaic "monument" (i.e. the head of Medusa as apotropaic object). I strove to subvert Medusa's role in history as the one whose hair is made of snakes and whose monstrous gaze turns to stone anyone she looks at. Rather than dance Medusa as the one who petrifies, I aimed to dance Medusa's own petrification, her own metamorphosis, which has made her take on the mask of the monster. I returned to Ovid's *Metamorphoses* 4.753-803 where it is Perseus

who gets to tell her story; again, the man speaks for the woman, as he brandishes her impotent head around for all to see. It is Ovid who tells us that Medusa was only transformed into a monster because it was a punishment; her crime – having been raped by Poseidon.[17] In "Medusa," the motif of the snakes – a continuous, circular movement of the hands, recalling the *helissein* (a coiling, twisting movement) of Roman pantomime dancers,[18] emanates from within my pelvis and torso, a manifestation of her fear and shame. The snake-like movement of the hands, wrists and fingers become an increasingly inescapable binding motion, which gradually overtakes the whole body. The coiling motion develops from the arms and torso into the hips and legs, pulling me into deliberately repetitive and accumulative sequences of *ronds de jambes* and turns, which trace circular figure of eight patterns on the floor.[19] Enclosed within the glass confines of the vitrine-like balcony, the circular phrase accelerates, Medusa's transformation an unstoppable force hurtling through my body and the space surrounding me. This frenetic phrase was punctuated by moments of what I came to term stillness-that-was-not-quite-stillness[20], hands crowning the head, snake-like above the mask. In this moment of moving stillness, I wanted to subvert the idea of stillness as petrification and Medusa's petrifying gaze. After a long moment's stillness-that-was-not-quite-stillness, in which my breath danced heavily as my heart rate slowed, the snaking hands motif would begin again and the accumulative phrase repeat to the other side of my glass enclosure. Again, the repetition of the movement served to stress the repetition of this particular story through time and history, the impossibility of escape from it. Rape and blame doomed to repeat throughout the centuries; the woman punished, deemed monstrous. As the dance came to a final "stillness," facing the Ashmolean's colossal front doors, my playing of the

apotropaic gaze was broken by my removing the mask from my face.[21] My hands stretched the mask out in offering to the visitors surrounding me on all sides - below me, above me, opposite me – as if to say, "You have only seen the mask that history has given her, but she is a woman. This, too, is Medusa." I revolved slowly, my arms stretched out to offer the mask to every viewer whose gaze I was able catch. In those final moments, I aimed to return the gaze, but also to hold it, acknowledging a moment of witness. We are all Medusas. We are all witnesses to this story. As choreographer-dancer, I see Medusa as an example of dance in the museum as the moment when the apotropaic monument is broken and shatters to pieces, that moment which philosopher Paul Ricœur speaks of as the "rupture of memory" (2004, 11). It is a moment of resistance, a dance of resistance; it is dance as "radical archaeology."

<Insert Photo 3. here>

Notes

[1] A video documentation of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)* is available online: http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/likely-terpsichore-fragments-solo-durational-dance-work. This was recorded in the Ashmolean on April 23, 2018. This was a day on which the museum was closed to the general public and so while the video acts as a 'memory' of the dance practice as it was performed in the museum, it is important to note that it is not a memory of an actual public performance.

[2] In this article I use the term "practice-as-research," in its UK context. The variations in

terminology in the wider field, namely "practice-as-research", "performance as research", "practice-led research", along with other variations in wide use (e.g. "practice-based research", "practice-led research," "performance-as-research") demonstrate the extensive range of definitions that this methodology has acquired to date. For an up-to-date discussion and unpicking of these terms in relation to performance-as-research as a methodology, I point the reader to Arlander et al. (2017). However, this project adopts a fairly simple definition: practice-as-research here means employing the creative processes of choreographing and performing as research methods.

[3] Selected examples of dance in the art museum in the UK and continental Europe over the last five years alone show the current scale of such activity and include: Boris Charmatz' "Musée de la danse" at Tate Modern, UK in 2015; Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker's "Work / Travail / Arbeid" at Tate Modern, UK in 2016; Pablo Bronstein's "Historical Dances in an Antique Setting" at Tate Britain, UK in 2016; Manuel Pelmus and Alexandra Pirici's "Public Collection" at Tate Modern, UK in 2016, and the pan-European "Dancing Museums" project which initially ran from June 2015-March 2017 involving Arte Sella, Italy; Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Netherlands; the Civic Museum in Bassano del Grappa, Italy; Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der Bildenden Künste, Austria; Le Louvre, France; MAC/VAL, France; and the National Gallery, UK; which, at the time of writing this article, is now in its second iteration (2018-2021).

[4] For example, Guy (2016) and Wookey (2015), as well as the "Dance in the Museum" Special Issue (2014) in *Dance Research Journal*, the "Theatre and the Museum: Cultures

of Display" Special Issue (2017) in the *Theatre Journal*, and "Performance, Choreography and the Gallery" (2017) in *Performance Paradigm* 13.

[5] In the USA, however, New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art recently appointed a choreographer in residence, Andrea Miller / Gallim Dance who, as the 2017-8 MetLiveArts Artist in Residence, premiered a new site-specific work, *Stone Skipping*, at the reconstructed Temple of Dendur in the museum's Sackler Wing in October 2017. The Temple of Dendur has previously been a site for dance, and significantly the Martha Graham Company performed "Frescoes" at its opening in 1978. What draws me to Miller's work is her appreciation of this particular museum as a site of history: "I'm focused on bringing embodiment into a space that is defined by materials, objects and artifacts. These are all masterpieces of our art *and of our history; but nevertheless the living body isn't present as a representative of our history* [...] I feel like we're [Gallim Dance] representing this deep part of our culture – art – and searching for meaning" (Miller interviewed in Cates 2017: unpaginated, my emphasis).

[6] Elias Ashmole founded the Ashmolean Museum of Art and Archaeology in Oxford (UK) in 1683. Importantly, it is part of the University of Oxford itself, and since its foundation, the triple combination of collection, teaching and research has remained the institution's distinguishing feature.

[7] Since the 1970s, the museum world has undergone significant and radical changes. Political and economic pressures have meant that museum professionals have shifted

their attention away from their collections and towards a more viewer-centered ethos. Attempting to end the traditional elitism of the museum and to ensure greater accessibility to these public spaces, the profession has been marked by a self-reflexivity that has become known as a "new museology."

[8] Their current location remains a bone of contention, as arguments for and against their repatriation to Athens continue cf. Jenkins (2016).

[9] Marc Quinn speaking at "Modern Classicisms: Classical Art and Contemporary Artists in Dialogue," November 10, 2017 at Kings College London, UK. The related research project's website can be found at www.modernclassicisms.com.

[10] This feminist approach specifically serves my research question about the moving body as potential counter-archival "object" in the museum, and whether its presence might allow a new visibility for those female bodies previously rendered invisible by history. It also uses the dancing body as museum exhibit to subvert the idea of the female body as archival object historically subjected to the "gaze", to use Laura Mulvey's (1975) term, of the male collector. As Helen Thomas (1996; 2003) points out, despite its limitations, Mulvey's theory was, and I would argue, continues to remain useful to feminist analysis because it offers itself as a model for "understanding the association and objectification of women through their bodies and their lack of cultural power within the discourses of patriarchy" (Thomas 1996, 73). It seems particularly useful when we think about a performance practice in the history or archaeology museum - that "seat" of cultural and

patrilineal power - where a female dancer's body is deliberately put on display for all eyes to see, and where the curatorial practice of display is subverted by replacing an inanimate object with a live, dancing body that shifts through time and space.

[11] See Michel Foucault's theory (1969 [2008]) of a general history.

[12] Gabriele Brandstetter, keynote address "The Museum in Transition: How do Performing Artists Affect Historiography?" at IFTR 2016, June 13, 2016, Stockholm University, Sweden.

[13] Over the course of two performance days (20-21 April 2018), a very small-scale study was undertaken under the auspices of the Archive of Performances of Greek and Roman Drama (APGRD), University of Oxford, and the Ashmolean to gather some data as to how visitors reacted to the dance in the museum. Visitors expressed how the dance offered another way of experiencing ancient history and culture, and of viewing the collection, with the dance "inviting attention on weight, materiality and texture, bringing history 'to life'", "connecting past and present", "bring[ing] it alive, taking us (the viewer) back to classical times, experiencing performance to some extent as they did in the past […] engag[ing] the emotions powerfully" and as "an alive and active experience" (visitor feedback).

[14] I am grateful to the Sensory Studies in Antiquity network

(www.sensorystudiesinantiquity.com) to which I belong for opening my own senses to the promotion of study of senses in the ancient world among archaeologists and ancient historians.

[15] Significantly, in the context of the post #MeToo era, in the UK, Medusa has seemingly become a popular symbol for both male and female choreographers alike, with Jasmin Vardimon's *Medusa* examining the gendered historical significance of the myth premiering in the UK in Autumn 2018, and Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's *Medusa* for the Royal Ballet staged at London's Royal Opera House in May 2019.

[16] Beard brings the image up to date with an exploration of how this same image is still used today to separate women from political power, citing as examples such as newspaper headlines dubbing the UK Prime Minister Theresa May "the Medusa of Maidenhead," to the even nastier merchandise on offer to supporters of Donald Trump during the US election campaign of 2016, such as mugs and T-shirts offering an image of Trump-Perseus brandishing the dripping head of Clinton-Medusa. As Beard concludes, "if ever you were doubtful about the extent to which the exclusion of women from power is culturally embedded or unsure of the continued strength of classical ways of formulating it – well, I give you Trump and Clinton, Perseus and Medusa, and rest my case" (2017, 79).

[17] Interestingly, this is also explored in Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui's "Medusa" (2019) for the Royal Ballet which stages her rape by Poseidon: in a striking moment of stillness,

Medusa is suspended in mid-air, held aloft on Poseidon's back. At first, Cherkaoui reads Medusa's ensuing monstrosity as her empowerment: choreographically, he places her at the center of a mass of faceless male soldiers, who one by one she manipulates and casts asunder, until she stands triumphantly en pointe, her fixed gaze staring out at us, her body poised still with only her arms moving, snaking and coiling. However, less convincingly, Cherkoaui also reads Perseus' eventual beheading of Medusa as her liberation: and this for me means the ballet in effect resists a potentially feminist, post #MeToo era reading, with the male "delivering" the female from her punishment through death.

[18] Slaney (2017) indicates the movement and dance vocabulary offered to us by ancient authors such as Lucian ("On the Dance") and Galen ("De Sanitate Tuenda"), although she is quick to point out that the "glossary" she compiles is derived from non-specialist spectators and we have no firm knowledge of how pantomime dancers referred to their steps.

[19] See video documentation of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*: http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/likely-terpsichore-fragments-solo-durational-dance-work. (at 41:09 onwards).

[20] See Crawley (2018b).

[21] See the video documentation of *Likely Terpsichore? (Fragments)*: http://podcasts.ox.ac.uk/likely-terpsichore-fragments-solo-durational-dance-work. 46:14

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