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*D*ance, *P*olitical *V*iolence, and  
*E*thnography in the *A*rchive

*D*ança, *V*iolência *P*olítica e *E*tnografia no  
*A*rquivo

## ABSTRACT

This article considers how dance and performance studies' emphasis on experiences of embodiment and investment in research methodologies as themselves a form of political practice inform dance studies' orientation toward personal collections research. I link the ethics and practices of performance ethnography to personal collections research to contend that close attention to the embodied nature of working in personal collections offers 1) methodological reflection broadly applicable to the use of personal collections in dance research and 2) a way for articulating the impact and resonances of personal collections research beyond published scholarship and/or public-facing digital collections.

## RESUMO

Este artigo analisa como a ênfase dos estudos de dança e performance nas experiências de incorporação e investimento em metodologias de pesquisa como uma forma de prática política influencia na orientação dos estudos de dança em relação à pesquisa de coleções pessoais. Relaciono a ética e as práticas da etnografia performática à pesquisa de coleções pessoais para argumentar que a atenção cuidadosa à natureza incorporada do trabalho com coleções pessoais oferece 1) uma reflexão metodológica amplamente aplicável ao uso de coleções pessoais na pesquisa em dança e 2) uma maneira de articular o impacto e as ressonâncias da pesquisa de coleções pessoais além dos trabalhos acadêmicos publicados e/ou coleções digitais voltadas para o público.

## A Scanner Story: Introduction I

In 2010 I was living in Buenos Aires, Argentina and conducting research toward my book, *Moving Otherwise: Dance, Violence, and Memory in Buenos Aires*, when I bought a scanner one afternoon in a crowded electronics shop in the Congreso neighborhood. It was small enough to fit in my handbag, along with my notebook, camera, and voice recorder. For over a year, my scanner and I traversed the city together and spent hours installed in the homes of choreographers featured in the book who so generously welcomed me and let me consult their personal collections.<sup>1</sup> Several choreographers—including Margarita Bali, Ana Deutsch, Vivian Luz, and Susana Tambutti—allowed me to digitize their complete collections. Over the course of twelve months I digitized thousands of items including photographs, news clippings, programs, letters, posters, choreographic notes, and some video that spanned from the 1960s to the 1990s (figure I). As an amateur archivist (using methods that would make a true one flinch), I catalogued each artists' collection in Excel sheets and copied files onto CD-ROMs. I left copies of these digitized collections with each artist in the hopes that they would be useful in some way. With the choreographers' permission, I also left CD-ROMs at the Departamento de Artes de Movimiento of the Universidad Nacional de las Artes.

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<sup>1</sup> See Fortuna 2019, p. 225 for a complete list of personal collections consulted for this project.



Figure 1: Selected material from the personal collections of Margarita Bali, Susana Tambutti, Vivian Luz, Ana Kamien and Susana Zimmermann

My intention, once the book was complete, was to return to this material and translate it into a digital repository that would offer broad access to it, with the aim of helping to redress limited institutional archives in Argentina as well as the Euro-American bias in existing digital dance collections. It would join the ever-growing field of projects that present digitized artists' collections through various online platforms.<sup>2</sup> It would be distinct from important, large-scale projects like Harmony Bench and Kate Elswit's *Dunham's Data*, which uses computational methods and analysis to ask questions about the transnational circulation of dancers otherwise unanswerable through traditional research methods. This digital project, ultimately, did not come to fruition. However, the process behind this shift in my research agenda brought to light urgent methodological and theoretical considerations. This article reflects on the embodied politics of personal collections research and proposes a reconceptualization of public-facing research outcomes, digital or otherwise.

<sup>2</sup> Examples are numerous and include those dedicated to an individual artist's or company's body of performance work and/or choreographic process as well as projects that bring together materials from multiple artists under a thematic lens. For an excellent survey of the field, see Fernandes, Coelho, and Vieira, 2020.

## On Personal Collections and Digital Possibilities: Introduction II

The story of the scanner, as presented above, is one way to frame the digitization of personal collection materials. My narrative above emphasizes the data (a series of objects that gain value through their accumulated mass), researcher labor, and the promise of digital tools to make a large amount of material available to researchers and students globally.<sup>3</sup> This telling of the story, however, also leaves out critical information, as can sometimes be the case with data-forward digital collections and exhibitions. The curation and presentation of digital objects, while offering access and broad context, does not always capture the complexities of the stories behind the data, what it means for the actual lives it reflects, and how its revelation relates to the politics of the past and the present. Whether artist or academic-driven, and intended for public access or private use, the digitization of personal collections invites pressing questions around the power negotiations and interpersonal ties between stakeholders that form through interaction with the data in these collections—concerns typically assigned to the realm of the ethnographic.

Personal collections research is a common practice in the dance field, understood as part of a multi-method approach, and often combines archival work with ethnographic methods (interviews and participant-observation) and close analysis of dance works. Work in personal collections is perhaps most commonly understood as an analog to working in institutional archives, both out of necessity in the face of few institutional archives dedicated to dance and also as an opportunity to counter the historical narratives supported by the materials that selectively make it into “official” archives. Debates abound about the ontology and epistemology of the archive, within and beyond the dance field, and I will not address those in detail here.<sup>4</sup> Instead, I want to think about

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<sup>3</sup> Open source platforms like Omeka and Scalar, which allow for both exhibition and database style curations, have been fundamental in fomenting the development digital archives.

<sup>4</sup> For the purposes of this essay, I follow Diana Taylor’s triple definition of the archive as “simultaneously an authorized place (the physical or digital site housing collections), a thing/object (or collection of things—the historical records and



encounters in personal collections as also (and perhaps predominately) ethnographic ones, whether working with the living authors of these collections (choreographers, in my case) or their stewards (i.e. family members or collaborators). Work in anthropology has analyzed the practice of conducting ethnographies of archives themselves as well as the benefits and drawbacks of presenting anthropological research findings as archives (Zeitlyn, 2012). However, less attention has been paid to the ethnographic aspects of how embodied interactions with interlocutors mediate the memories and narratives constructed through materials sourced in personal collections.

In the following, I want to consider how dance and performance studies' emphasis on experiences of embodiment and investment in research methodologies as themselves a form of political practice might inform dance studies' orientation toward personal collections research. I link the ethics and practices of performance ethnography to personal collections research to contend that close attention to the embodied nature of working in personal collections offers 1) methodological reflection broadly applicable to the use of personal collections in dance research and 2) a way for articulating the impact and resonances of personal collections research beyond published scholarship and/or public-facing digital collections.

### **On Those Who Lend a Hand: Ethnography in the Archive**

My digitization efforts came out of a research project focused on contemporary dance's relationship to histories of political and economic violence in Buenos Aires from the mid-1960s to the mid-2010s. These materials bear the weight—and literal traces—of collective and personal traumas, particularly related to periods of military dictatorship in the 1960s, 70s, and 80s. Brutal practices of forced disappearance, torture, and murder, targeting those

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unique or representative objects marked by inclusion), and a practice (the logic of selection, organization, access, and preservation over time that deems certain objects “archivable”)” (Taylor, 2012, paragraph nine).

accused of political subversion, marked the period of the last military dictatorship (1976-1983) as well as the years immediately before it. More broadly, repressive periods of dictatorship created pervasive climates of fear that profoundly shaped life on and off the stage—including what materials choreographers saved and how they saved them. Implicit, then, in the .pdfs and .jpegs filed away on my hard drive are the ethics of how and to what ends pieces of painful pasts are stirred up and read in the present. These ethical questions become explicit not only through a theoretical consideration of what it means to research violent pasts, but also through a practice-based consideration of the methodological particularities of working in personal collections.

Seated or standing, in private spaces, my experience in the “archive,” like many dance and performance researchers, did not resemble a traditional one. There were no gloves, paper weights, or lockers for storing belongings not meant to intermingle with the ordered boxes and folders of the institutional archive. My embodied experience revolved around shared cups of coffee, conversations over scrapbooks and binders strewn across dining tables, and joint search missions through the detritus of storage closets. For example, the hand that you can see in figure II belongs to choreographer Estela Maris. Maris herself helped me to hold down pages in her carefully stored scrapbooks so that I could get good pictures. Then in her eighties, she stayed with me while I worked, answering questions and recalling new information with each flipped page.



Figure II

My access to personal collections like Maris's came not via a library card or email correspondence with archivists, but through relationships developed through the ethics and practices of ethnographic work. In my case, specifically performance ethnography's emphasis on the politics of embodied exchange. Performance ethnography, as a theory and method rooted in performance studies, attends to both the macro- and micro-power dynamics involved in researcher-interlocutor relations and invests in a dialogic approach that understands ethnographic work as politically invested work. As Della Pollock summarizes, performance ethnography "has shifted the *relationship* of the researcher and the ostensibly 'researched' (the field and the field subjects), reconfiguring longstanding subject-object relations as co-performative...as the reciprocal intervention of each on the other, transforming each in turn" (Pollock, 2006, p. 325). Building on a concept introduced by performance ethnographer Dwight Conquergood, D. Soyini Madison has eloquently elaborated the key



concept of co-performative witnessing, describing it as a “shared temporality, bodies on the line, soundscapes of power, dialogic interanimation, political action, and matters of the heart” (2007, p. 827). Co-performative witnessing asks us to do “what others do *with* them inside the politics of their locations...and most importantly inside the materiality of their struggles and consequences” (Madison, 2007, p. 829). Co-performative witnessing aims to redress the ways in which participant-observation does not quite capture, “the active, risky, and intimate engagement with Others that is the expectation of performance” (Madison, 2007, p. 826).

Work in personal collections puts bodies on the line, in a shared temporality, and within a set of power relationships in a way that fundamentally aligns it with ethnography and differentiates it from the politics of traditional archival work. Entering an interlocutor’s home and laboring beside them over pieces of the past demands an immediate accounting for power differentials, miscommunications, intentions, and the ethical responsibilities between bodies in a private space. The histories of violence that cross the materials in the personal collections that I consulted meant that co-performative witnessing had to be explicitly trauma informed. This meant not only asking for consent to ask questions about sensitive histories and making it clear that we would stop at any point but also working together to find ways to hold space safely if and when the past emerged unexpectedly, as it does. The memory of traumatic events, as we know from a developed body of interdisciplinary work, flashes up, in bits and pieces, in the present. In Cathy Caruth’s well-known formulation, “trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in an individual’s past, but rather in the way that its very unassimilated nature—the way it was precisely *not known* in the first instance—returns to haunt the survivor later on” (1996, p. 4). These returns can come seemingly out of nowhere and in relationship to experiences or objects with no ostensible connection to the “simple violent or original event.”

Once I was working through programs of a choreographer's productions from the late 1960s while she was putting away groceries in the nearby kitchen. As I scanned and catalogued away, I noticed that a mark on one document made it difficult to decipher the name of one of the cast members of a piece that had been performed only once. I asked the choreographer if she could make out the name, but she could not. In the programs from that era, one person was consistently credited as a choreographic assistant. I asked if she and the former assistant were still in contact, and if so, if this person might remember. The choreographer's face clouded and her body tensed, and I knew the past had flooded the present. The assistant, who had also been a close personal friend, was disappeared in 1974 during Isabel Perón's presidency amid escalating practices of repression in the period leading up to the 1976 military coup. The dance archive—in this case the contents of the personal collection, pulled out of forgotten boxes buried in closets—is an archive of political violence, albeit in a form that might not be immediately recognizable as such. The charge that it holds, however, became visible through a body-to-body encounter imbued with, to reinvoké Madison's words, the "intimacy and risk" of ethnographic work.

Written scholarship offers one space for critically engaging with how traces embedded in cast lists and production credits articulate real life traumas that manifest in the here and now, on both individual and collective scales. While certainly not a perfect or even privileged space, the scholarly text offers a format for untangling the stories behind the "data" as well as a space for signaling the stories purposefully left untold. On the later point, in my book I echo Dityah Larasati's approach to her study of dance in post-genocide Indonesia, remaining acutely aware that "at stake are difficult decisions as to which parts of this long journey it is possible to mention specifically or describe in detail in order to support my arguments...while minimizing the potential to cause harm or put others at risk" (2013, p. xxii). Yet how—or can—the "data" gathered through personal collections research, particularly work that intersects

with violent histories, be made accessible in a way that keeps it connected to the stories behind it and the lives it affects? How to take up these questions in relationship to digital collections and exhibitions whose premise is the wide accessibility of large amounts of data? How to translate an ethic of co-performative witness, so central to working in the personal collections to which these materials belong, to a digital environment? How to reconcile a desire to redress one silence (a lack of accessible archival resources) with the ethical need to retain other silences?

### **Digital Archives and the Memory of Painful Pasts**

Upon completion of my book, a digital archive of the personal collections materials that I had digitized felt like the next natural step. As Diana Taylor aptly notes in her published keynote “Save As,” “the new digital era is obsessed with archives—as metaphor, as place, as system, and as logic of knowledge production, transmission, and preservation” (2012, paragraph eight). These technologies, she notes, at least seem to “offer the updated Marxist promise for the 21<sup>st</sup> century: that we—individual users—now control the means of production, distribution, and access to information, communities, and online worlds” (Taylor, 2012, paragraph ten). However, a developing body of work (Taylor’s included) has critiqued how the digital humanities drive for data often obscures power inequities, social categories of difference, and historical context. Scholars deeply invested in the potential of digital tools are also working to highlight how digital media’s ability to create new relationships to information might address these issues rather than reinforce a utopian narrative of the digital as a neutral, democratized space of content builders and users.<sup>5</sup>

Historian and digital humanist Jessica Marie Johnson’s powerfully written article “Markup Bodies: Black [Life] Studies and Slavery [Death]

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<sup>5</sup> See Fiormonte, Chaudhuri, and Ricaurte, 2022 for an excellent volume of essays that explores the limitations on and possibilities for a globally diverse digital humanities.

Studies” examines the reproduction of Black death and commodification in the digital documentation of the transatlantic slave trade. She considers how “from blogs and journals built on fourth-generation hypertext markup language (HTML) guided by cascading style sheets (CSS) to databases using extensible markup language (XML) and standard query language (SQL), scholars using digital tools mark up the bodies and quantify the lives of people of African descent.” She offers a particularly illustrative example (worth examining in detail) of how digital tools can gloss over the trauma embedded in “data” and re-inscribe historical violence. In 1998, David Eltis and David Richardson launched the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database, a massive project containing almost thirty thousand Atlantic slave trade voyages compiled from ship manifest data. The researchers presented their CD-ROM collection shortly after at a conference. As Johnson recounts:

By some observer accounts, researchers seemed unprepared to grapple with the needs and desires of busloads of ‘descendants of slaves’ in the audience, who attended to learn more about the ramifications of the slave trade. Understanding the dimensions of slave ships provided context for the experience of the Middle Passage but could not seem to capture the moral rupture and sense of injustice expressed by people of African descent in the room. Once again, metrics in minutiae neither lanced historical trauma nor bridged the gap between the past itself and the search for redress. Computation could not, it seemed, capture the violent quandary that was the nation’s history of and relationship to human bondage. Contemporary encounters with digital technology have inherited this tension, with researchers struggling to appreciate the inhumanity of bondage and the attendant dehumanization of black lives while also responding to the need for critical, rigorous, and engaged histories of slavery as histories of the present. (2018, p. 62)

In its initial instantiation, this massive project, which collated and processed an unprecedented amount of data related to the forced migration of Black women, children, and men, did not capture the weight of the stories behind the data or understand trauma as an ongoing collective and intergenerational process with material impact for Black lives in the present. It did not at first account for the “risk” and “intimacy”—and messiness and discomfort— of a



shared temporality, bodies on the line, and power dynamics that inform co-performative witness. As Johnson notes, the database's current form, titled *Slave Voyages*, has done substantial work to link the revelation of previously obscured historical data to individual stories and experiences. In her article, Johnson goes on to advocate for increased attention to Black digital practices that, employing a range of critical and transformative methods, "have digitized and mediated their own black freedom dreams" and "infused the drive for data with a corresponding concern with and for the humanity and the souls of the people involved" (2018, p. 69).

Within the digital humanities realm, one performance-focused project dealing with histories of violence stands out as offering an embodied approach deeply sensitive to the questions that Johnson raises in relationship to the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database. Focused on the Colombian Pacific/Chocó region, the project *Prácticas artísticas corporales y artes escénicas en procesos de reconciliación, construcción de memoria y paz en 4 municipios del Chocó y el Pacífico Medio: Unguía, Bojayá, Buenaventura y Guapi* is a collaboration between the Universidad de Antioquia and Royal Holloway, University of London (UK), and resulted in the digital archive *Corpografías*. Motivated by the 2016 peace agreement between the Colombian state and the Fuerzas Armadas de Colombia, the project aims to "contribuir a la construcción de memoria y procesos de sanación a través de las artes, centrándose en las voces, la presencia y los procesos creativos de las comunidades afectadas. De qué manera estas comunidades perciben el conflicto y construyen memoria a través de las prácticas corporales" (*Corpografías*, n.d, Quienes somos). Led by principal investigator Melissa Blanco Borelli, the research team behind the project worked extensively with artistic organizations and personal collections in each of the four provinces under study, with a particular emphasis on Afro-Colombian and Indigenous cultural practices.

The site's homepage invites navigation by clicking on the name of one of the four featured regions or via the "Archive" hyperlink. When users choose to

begin by selecting a region, they enter a page featuring maps, audio clips (of music and interviews with interlocutors), videos, images, and text that contextualizes the featured cultural practices of this region. The “Archive” option portals users to a page where they can appreciate the breadth of data archived on the site. From this page, users can filter material based on tags (creative process, corporeal practices, profiles, objects, and places) and region. In this place-forward approach, *Corpografías* draws heavily on the field of digital ethnography, which Natalie Underberg and Elayne Zorn define as “a method for representing real-life culture through combining the characteristic features of digital media with the elements of story” (2013, p.10).

The emphasis of the project, via either mode of navigation, is not on the quantity of data or an attempt to directly narrate the history of the conflict; rather, it aims for something more akin to an archive of bodily recuperation. Several choreographers that I worked with in my Buenos Aires-based project—particularly Silvia Hodgers and Silvia Vladimivsky—understand the dances that they created based on experiences of political violence (in the form of detention, torture, exile, lost loves, and fractured families) as a process of bodily recuperation. This language reflects broader Argentine activist vocabularies around collective memory of political violence. “Recuperation,” here, does not refer to recovering literal facts of past events. Rather, it refers to movement as a modality for entering into, dwelling in, and sifting through the pieces of individual and collective traumatic pasts. Echoing this language, in the methodologically-focused “Investigación y creación” portion of the site, the authors term *Corpografías* a collection of “archivos recuperados.” In their meaning, the term “archivos recuperados” emphasizes how the curatorial logic of the site mirrors partner organizations’ and interlocutors’ own understandings and categorizations of their material. It is worth noting that this section features “meta” photographs of project team members filming interviews and looking at digitized archival material on tablets, offering a window into experiences

similar to the one captured in figure II of Estela Maris's hand holding down a page of her scrapbook for me to photograph.

Understanding *Corpografías* as a project of recuperation explains why “data” is not presented as neutral objects speaking to a stable past, but rather as materials that form part of a processual, highly subjective experience of piecing together histories, some deeply painful, that will always remain partially incomplete. It demonstrates how digital tools have the potential to stage the richness and complexity of ethnographic work as part of the difficult and necessary task of responsibly engaging with the violent pasts. *Corpografías* exemplifies a digital archive that keeps practitioners, embodiment, and narrative at the center as it also directs critical awareness to the politics of users' engagement with these materials and the lives behind them through careful reflection on the intimacies of the documentation process itself.

As the years passed, I realized that my own interest in creating a digital archive, like *Corpografías*, based on my personal collections research was something of a red herring. As I wondered if digital tools could make it possible for users to feel a choreographers' presence with them—Maris's hand—as they moved through materials in digital space, several events transpired that swayed me from a digital ethnography approach and deeper into reflection on the role of co-performative witness in personal collections research itself.<sup>6</sup> By way of conclusion, I consider how these experiences demonstrate the resonance of co-performative witness in forums beyond written scholarship or digital humanities projects even as they evade traditional measures of research output and impact.

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<sup>6</sup> I was unsuccessful in securing funding to assemble a team to build a immersive, virtual reality environment that drew users' attention to the different corporeal experiences of encountering archival materials in personal collections versus institutional spaces. A particular inspiration was Angel Nieves' *Soweto '76 3D*, a three-dimensional archive interface that allows users to guide themselves through a re-creation of the township of Soweto in apartheid-era South Africa; the project aims to redress the uneven portrayal of the lives of Black township residents in the mainstream historical record of the anti-apartheid uprising. In addition to the (not insubstantial) contingencies of funding, I moved away from this project for the reasons outlined in the final section of this essay.

### On Matters of the Heart

Central to the tenet of co-performative witness is a value of reciprocity; that is, an attempt to move away from an extractive model of ethnographic research. Over time and with my own maturation as a researcher, I have come to understand reciprocity beyond exchanges bound by the temporality of a particular research project. In the decade and a half since I purchased the scanner that began this story, reciprocity has unveiled itself as an expanded field of synergies, resonances, and mutual support that wax and wane over years. In 2018, sat in the Museo Nacional de Bellas Artes in Buenos Aires, I witnessed Margarita Bali's presentation of her book *Universo Bali Danza y Audiovisual*. Part artist book and part catalog of archival materials from her personal collection, the beautifully produced volume includes narrative text, stills from Bali's extensive repertoire of video dance work, a breadth of documentation related to her stage work (individually and as part of the Nucleodanza company), and writing from fellow artists commenting on her work and its significance for the dance field. Though I did not contribute to the book directly, I was honored to learn from Bali that my work with her personal collection had affirmed her desire to curate and present her personal collection, at least in part, in this form. Flipping through the text's pages, particularly the "críticas" section that features collages of review clippings (much like figure 1), produced something of an uncanny experience for me (2018, p. 229-237). I had poured over the photographs that I took of many of these reviews in the process of writing my book, and in seeing them presented as a collage I was taken back to the memory of seeing hundreds of review clippings strewn across Bali's kitchen table as I scanned. Witnessing this material systematized and presented under Bali's authorship and curation felt like doing "what others do with them inside the politics of their locations," to recite Madison (2007, p. 829).

During the same trip to Buenos Aires where I had the opportunity to attend Bali's book presentation, Vivian Luz and I also had a chance to reconnect.



As we reminisced about my time digitizing her personal collection, she expressed her desire to publish a book similar to *Bali*'s. This meeting initiated a series of conceptual conversations about how to organize the text and select material for inclusion, which included our joint re-immersion into the material that I had digitized eight years prior. In addition, I was honored to contribute a short text narrating Luz's artistic work in relationship to the period leading up to, including, and following the last military dictatorship (Luz, 2021, p. 60-61). Published in 2021, *Vivian Luz Baila*, like *Universo Bali*, features photographs, press clippings, and other performance ephemera from Luz's collection organized in a format germane to Luz's worldview. Where *Bali*'s book is focused more tightly on her extensive body of choreographic and audiovisual work, Luz's spends more time linking her personal history to her artistic one (she comes from a family of artists) through texts, illustrations, and personal photographs.

These two projects, one of which I collaborated on and neither of which I authored, ultimately offered responses to the questions that I was asking of the digital humanities, albeit in less accessible formats than a digital online project. Through the form of published books that combine conventions of archival catalogs, memoir, dance criticism, and dance scholarship, they offer access to the personal collections materials that I had digitized while keeping the artists' own narratives—and the complexities of revealing histories of violence—at the center.

Without claiming credit for either project—both were conceived of and driven by the artists themselves<sup>7</sup>—I do want to propose thinking about the coming-into-being of *Universo Bali* and *Vivian Luz Baila* as “outcomes” of an ethics co-performative witness. By “outcomes” I do not mean the artists' books themselves but rather the web of relationships and commitments that they represent between the artists, their personal collections materials, and

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<sup>7</sup> In my discussion of *Universo Bali* and *Vivian Luz Baila* I am emphasizing the beneficial ways in which the books make selected personal collections materials available to a broader public. However, I do think that they fall within Rosemary Candelario's definition of artist-driven archives as ones which are “aimed at articulating something about an artist's ongoing body of work and artistic process rather than enabling the preservation of a collection of materials” (2018, p. 81).

interlocutors such as myself and other project team members. I am thinking here of Dwight Conquergood's understanding of "articulation" as a valued research outcome in the field of performance studies. Conquergood invokes "articulation" as a third category, alongside staged performance and published scholarship, to name "projects that reach outside the academy and are rooted in an ethic of reciprocity and exchange; knowledge that is tested by practice within a community; social commitment, collaboration, and contribution/intervention as a way of knowing" (2002, p. 152). While this admittedly nebulous definition evades standard metrics for measuring researcher output, it does capture the range of impact possible through co-performative witness in personal collections research and helps clarify that the stakes of this work extend beyond the immediate concerns of the academy or a particular research project.

In invoking articulation to triangulate the relationship between these artist books, personal collections research, and public-facing outputs I do not mean to suggest a hierarchy among formats. Rather, I believe that the questions that digital humanities scholarship opens up about access, ethics, and equity *might also* open the door to valorizing less clearly-defined outcomes, like articulation, that hold co-performative witness at the center. As dance research continues to expand its historiographic focus beyond the US and Europe, an ethics of co-performative witness in archival and digital as well as ethnographic work offers a framework for politically-engaged and ethically-responsive methods.

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Recebido em 13 de maio de 2025.

Aprovado em 28 de julho de 2025.