

## **34<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the ICTMD Study Group on Ethnochoreology Trikala, Greece – 20-27 July 2026**

The 34<sup>th</sup> Symposium of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology ICTMD in 2026 will be held in Trikala, Greece and will be hosted by the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens.

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### **Symposium Organization**

The Symposium will be organized for in-person attendance, there will be no parallel sessions. Only ICTMD members in good standing can participate. Participants are expected to take part in the full Symposium. Presenters should plan to publish their papers in the Proceedings volume to follow the Symposium.

A half-day online session (Pre-symposium) will be organized in advance of the Symposium for those who cannot attend in person. This option will be available for a limited number of papers. The content of this session will be commented on during the Symposium. Please indicate your interest in the online form of participation in your paper proposal.

### **Themes**

The ICTMD Study Group on Ethnochoreology's biennial symposia are dedicated to two selected themes, which form the focus of presentations and discussion. The two themes for the 2026 Symposium are (1) Dance, Migration, and Memory (2) Dance, Humour and Play.

## Theme 1: *Dance, Migration, and Memory*

The motto of topic 1 could be “Moving Memories, Dancing Migration”. Memory is not solely a cognitive or textual phenomenon; it is deeply embodied, enacted, and relational. As D. Taylor (2003) argues, the act of remembering must be understood through the dynamic interplay between the “*archive*”—stable, material records of history—and the “*repertoire*”—embodied memory enacted through performance, gesture, and movement. Dance complicates these distinctions, as it does not merely recall the past but actively reshapes it through embodied enactment, adaptation, and intersubjective engagement.

Similarly, P. Connerton (1989) contends that “bodily practices” shape how societies transmit knowledge across generations, particularly in ritualized or performative settings. In migratory contexts, where written records of the past may be fragmented or lost, dance becomes a *corporeal archive*, preserving cultural memory in movement, rhythm, and affect. In that line of thought, D. Molloy (2024) argues that dance can serve as a “*sonic and corporeal archive*”, where rhythm and movement bear the imprints of colonial histories, forced migrations, and cultural hybridities. Memory and commemoration of the past include aspects we want to maintain or to bring back, but also some that we want to eliminate and reject, consciously or not. Hence it is of importance to explore what is omitted in the individual/collective memory through dance, as much as what is retained and exhibited, for which (unspoken) reasons, and in which ways.

Migration, whether voluntary or forced, reconfigures, and sometimes disrupts memory landscapes, leading to transformations and circulations in cultural expression, belonging, and historical consciousness. Dance plays a pivotal role in these processes, functioning as both a site of continuity and reinvention. As J. Giese (2024) explores in *Moving Bodies, Moving Pasts*, diasporic communities use dance to sustain cultural memory while negotiating new socio-political landscapes. However, dances also change within themselves based on the distortion/recreation of the cultural memory and depending on the social changes such as migration, transnational and transgenerational heritage transmission. The act of dancing might carry “*permeable histories*,” wherein bodily movements encode past experiences, political ruptures, and intergenerational traumas as well as future oriented expectations. Hence dance is not merely a retrospective act of remembering, but a “*kinaesthetic re-imagining*” of the past, allowing migrant bodies to resist erasure and reclaim agency in transnational spaces (Lepecki 2010). Movement links performers to their heritage while also enabling economic and social advancement abroad; through dance, artists build networks, reshape identities, and sustain connections to home (Kivenko 2016).

Studying embodied memory also permits to challenge the hegemony of textual and verbal communication prevailing in various epistemologies by demonstrating that knowledge can be transmitted through sensory, affective, and corporeal engagement. As S. Foster (1995) has observed, choreography is “a way of writing history with the body,” one that disrupts linear and official narratives of the past. This is particularly significant in the study of “*post-memory*”, a concept developed by M. Hirsch (1997) to describe how subsequent generations inherit histories of trauma not through direct

experience but through cultural and artistic practices. Dance serves as a key medium through which historical loss, displacement, trauma, but also success or discoveries in new territories, are not only recalled but actively reimagined and negotiated.

Furthermore, dance in migratory contexts can be deeply political, serving as both an affective practice of belonging and a medium for resistance. Examining choreographic performances by migrant artists, M. Barouta (2024) suggests that they serve as "*collective acts of activism*," transforming autobiographical experiences of displacement into public, performative interventions. At the same time, questions on the values of identity, memory and past have been raised in alignment to contemporary interplay of migration and (national, ethnic) identity with globalization and transnational processes. Hence, recalling the past through dance can serve not only to keep a distinctive identity but also to pursue inclusion, to claim and/or provide integration and build local ties and sense of belonging into his/her "host" society (Gibert 2024). Even more so, performing dance might be a way to challenge backward-looking political moves often connected to migration.

This symposium invites scholars to explore the ways in which dance, as an embodied practice, negotiates histories of migration, circulation, displacement, hopes and belonging. How do migrant communities use dance to reclaim histories that might have been fractured or erased, valorised or honoured? In what ways do migratory experiences reconfigure choreographic traditions, sometimes leading to the emergence of hybrid dance forms? How can performing dance re-write the past, emphasise the present and foresee the future? What does it mean to inherit a history through bodily practices rather than written records? How do movements, gestures, and ethnochoreographic forms transmit affective and historical knowledge across generations? How can interdisciplinary methodologies better capture the affective, kinetic, rhythmical, and sensorial dimensions of migrant memory? How dances as cultural heritage elements change by being exposed to cultural memory dynamics, transgenerationality of the memory and the act of migration?

Communications are expected to be based on ethnographic fieldwork and data, yet to go beyond descriptions in order to stimulate collective discussions among the participants of this symposium.

We welcome papers that address, but are not limited to, the following themes:

- Migration and the Reconfiguration of Memory Spaces: How do migrant and refugee communities use dance to recreate, contest, or reimagine cultural memory in new sociopolitical environments? How are dance traditions, as crucial forms of embodied knowledge, passed down through generations within migrant communities?
- Dance in Flux: How dance practice and repertoires change via migrations, and/or are based on transgenerational heritage transmission? How do specific movements, gestures, choreographic structures, and musical elements evoke and perpetuate memories of the past, both personal and shared, based on the 'constant' change, yet rooted in present contexts and issues?
- Dance, Place, and Belonging: How does dance connect migrants to their ancestral homelands and create a sense of place in new environments? How

do dance practices negotiate the tension between rootedness and mobility? How do dance performances transform spaces into sites of cultural memory and belonging?

- **Intersections of Dance, Affect, and Identity:** How do emotional, sensorial, and corporeal dimensions of dance shape processes of remembering, belonging, and identity formation in migratory, diasporic or transnational settings? How does dance contribute to the construction and negotiation of post-memory narratives, bridging generations, connecting diasporic communities, and fostering a sense of shared history across geographical boundaries?
- **Dance as a Site of Activism and Resistance:** How do choreographic works and performative gestures address histories of violence, trauma, erasure, or oppression? How do embodied practices offer forms of resistance or reconciliation? How can dance challenge derogatory views on migrants?
- **Embodied Performance and the Politics of Representation:** How do ethnochoreographic works negotiate issues of authenticity, heritage, and cultural appropriation in transnational contexts? What are the ethical implications of representing embodied memory in performative settings?
- **Dance as Embodied Archive:** How does dance act as a form of “writing by the body” (Foster, 1995) in the absence of textual records? How do (folk) dancers/dances (are) navigate(d) (via) memories shaped by various forms and outcomes of migration?
- **Post-Memory and Intergenerational Transmission:** How is embodied memory inherited and transformed by younger generations within diasporic or migrant communities? What role does dance play in transmitting memory beyond direct personal experience? How is dance used to transmit memories across generations, particularly in contexts where direct experience of historical events is absent but culturally inherited?
- **Dance and Digital Technologies:** How are digital technologies being used to document, preserve, disseminate, and revitalize dance traditions associated with migration and cultural memory? What are the ethical considerations involved in archiving and representing these intangible cultural forms in digital spaces?
- **Interdisciplinary Approaches:** What interdisciplinary methodologies can bridge the gaps between ethnochoreology, memory studies, migration studies, and trauma studies to explore the complexities of embodied memory? This includes, but is not limited to, ethnographic fieldwork, movement analysis, oral history interviews, archival research, performance analysis, digital ethnography, and participatory dance practice.

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Lepecki, A. (2010). *Exhausting Dance: Performance and the Politics of Movement*. London: Routledge.

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## **Theme 2: Dance, Humour and Play**

While humour is more and more becoming an object of interest for anthropologists (Swinkels, de Koning 2016), as well as for ethnomusicologists (Guillebaud, Stoichita 2013; Sutton 1997), less has been done by anthropologists of dance and ethnochoreologists, may it be participatory or presentational dance. However, focusing on what humour in/to dance as an embodied practice calls upon, on the where, when, what, and how, can be a precious tool to reach out a better understanding of a dance genre, a community of dance practitioners and the general political, social and cultural context in which it is embedded. The work of M. Bakhtin (1984) has laid important basis on the (folk) culture of laughter and especially on the "grotesque image of the body" as its essence. Humour, as a communicative act or beyond, can therefore be approached as a form of "engaged knowing" (Göpfert 2024). Humorous effects often requiring that both dancers and audience have the necessary (shared) knowledge and references, its study might offer valuable insights into a specific dance genre and its world and ecosystem.

Whilst research on humour is primarily interested in its verbal dimension, a study through non-verbal medium such as dance and music can permit the scholar to free oneself from such a limiting perspective (Houseman 2013). How can humour, laughter, joke, tricks, comedy, play, mischief, wit and so on take place outside of language? What are the principal humorous processes and comic regimes anchoring themselves

into the body in movement? How can dance as an embodied experience of humour play with, and upon, senses and affects (Carbonnel 2018). Dancing humour is a complex and multi-layered process which calls upon a detailed and precise study of each layer, their entanglements as well as their discrepancies.

Exploring the complicated relationship between play, ridiculousness, and seriousness, J. Huizinga argues that dance can be characterized as pure play (1980: 164-165). Yet, although humour is not necessary based on play, nor playing always implies humour, both are taking place within a framework of action different from the everyday life (Hamayon 2016) while addressing elements from it. Playing with rules, norms, or rigidity of behaviours can prompt laughter, hence permitting challenges to the established order as much as reinforcing them. Furthermore, various forms of competition can take place during, if not structure, specific dance practices or dance genres, articulating play, game, and individual or collective power relations (Steil 2021). Playing with dance implies playing *with something* but also *with* (the complicity of) *someone* (Giurchescu 2001) and often, *about something*. The interlocutors, as well as their ways of responding to humour and play, can be numerous: other dancers, musicians, audience, non-humans, and so on.

Playing and humouring through dance can simply be “for the sake of a good laugh” and corporeal enjoyment, yet it often permits participants to address serious or even unpleasant issues. Humour and play in dance question conventions, limits, and ethics of a particular culture, and have a specific ability, especially humour, to make comments, unmask or expose hidden things, provoke the powerholders. Confronting, criticizing, provoking, challenging or overtaking can take place within dance through the display, exaggeration, or amplification of incongruity, if not “dissonance” (Göpfert 2024) that the dancer(s) intend to address.

However, humour in dance does not only aim at provoking or differentiating, it can also become a means of action to discover new experiences and/or integrate other actors. Calling upon creativity and social interactions, play can likewise be a means to explore the dance, its possibilities as well as its limits.

Last but not least, humour and play as methods can also become heuristic tools for the researcher (Zhan, Xu 2024; Swinkels, de Koning 2016; Walton 1993; NoJoke Project 2023-2027).

Playing or joking *with* dance, or *during* a dance piece or an entire dance event, can take place within a large spectrum of context and modalities of actions which this symposium intends to explore further. Communications are expected to be based on ethnographic fieldwork and data, yet to go beyond descriptions in order to stimulate collective discussions among the participants of this symposium.

Topics addressed may include, but are not limited to:

- Multi-scalar analysis of humour / play in dance. At which “level” can humour / play be used in dance: few bars in a dance piece, an entire dance piece, a dance event, a dance genre, etc.

- What are the forms, processes, and regimes of humour and play in dance? Imitation, parody, comedy, satire, brief wink or allusion, quotation, double meaning, incongruity, ambiguity, exaggeration, competition, game, self-deprecation, grotesque, irony, hyperbolization, travesty, diminution, strangeness, distortion, absurdity, farce, clownery, and so on.
- Which dimensions of dance are used to convey humour and/or with which one can play: movement itself, rhythm, body, interactions, affects, senses, gaze, structure, music, costumes, props, rendering and rendition of characters, etc.
- Humour / play in dance as means of social action. Confrontation, defiance, exclusion, transgression, oppression, critique, transformation, inclusion, valorisation, recognition, unification. Humour / play in dance as a means of resistance, anti-systemic agency, giving voice to the marginalized.
- How are humour / play connected to affects, feelings and the senses: of the dancers, of the musicians, of the audience? Of which kind? Pleasure, joy, frustration, anger, sadness, surprise, nostalgia, etc.
- Degrees of spontaneity of humour / play. Completely unplanned, improvised or based on a planned script, totally expected, etc. and by whom? Other dancers, musicians, audience, outsiders of the dance tradition (tourists, etc.). Can humour in dance be unconscious? Unexpected by the dancer her/himself?
- Social and cultural competences to create / understand humour and play in dance. With whom can one play or laugh in dance? With whom one cannot? Which are the categories of participants able / allowed / expected / forbidden to bring humour into dance (genre, age, status, occupation, role, level of expertise, etc.)? What does one need to possess to be able to bring humour into dance / to play with dance? Expertise in the dance genre, specific personality, practice of other dance genres, other performing art, etc.
- Space and/or time and/or contexts for humour/play in dance: Where, When and How can one play with dance? With whom? Playing *with* dance / Playing *during* a dance piece, a dance event.
- Dance, humour, play and knowledge / knowledge production. Shared references. Themes and references called upon: norms, power, politics, kinship, relationships, everyday life events, sport, etc., but also other dance genre. What is the trans-cultural potential of humour in dance (between different dance genres, countries, social or cultural groups, etc.)?
- What are practitioners' discourses on humour / play in dance (if any). To whom is humour / play in dance addressed? What interactions exist between producers and recipients in relation to shared object of ridiculing? How is humorous dance received? What are the reactions of the other participants, the audience, the organisers? Is the audience expecting humour / play to be part of this dance/event?
- Limits, Risks, Failure, Success. Are there limits to humour / play? What is the nature of such limits? What happens if one exceeds these limits? Do humour / play attempts always reach their aim? Are there failures? According to whom?

In which way? Can a failure be transformed into a success? How? How do humour in dance / playing with dance imply taking a risk (financial, political, artistic, etc.)? In which ways can experiments or explorations through humour / play in dance be conducted?

- Humour / Play and the researcher. The researcher as a target for humour / play. The researcher as a partner for humour / play. Dance as a methodological tool for the researcher.

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Steil, L. (2021). *Boucan. Devenir quelqu'un dans le milieu afro*. Toulouse: Presses Universitaires du Mirail.

Sutton, R.A. (1997). "Humor, Mischief and Aesthetics in Javanese Gamelan Music," *The Journal of Musicology*, 15(3), 390-415.

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Walton, K. (1993). "Understanding Humor, Understanding Music", *The Journal of musicology*, 11(1), 32-44.

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#### Proposal submission

**The deadline for proposals is November 1, 2025**, or October 15, 2025 (this earlier



deadline is for those who want help with their English).

For the online submission, you will be asked to provide:

1. Personal data, including a very brief biography (200 words)
2. Selected mode of presentation (including interest in an online session before the Symposium).
3. Choice of theme 1 or theme 2
4. Proposal consisting of title and abstract (200-300 words)

Please submit your proposal to [ICTMD.Prog.Trikala.2026@etik.com](mailto:ICTMD.Prog.Trikala.2026@etik.com)

Evaluation of proposals will be done anonymously, and **presenters will be notified of the Programme Committee decision by January 31, 2026.**

### **Modes of Presentation**

A variety of presentation modes are possible, and applicants are encouraged to carefully consider which mode of presentation will work best for their presentation. Applicants may only present once during the symposium. The Programme Committee strongly encourages presenters to consider panels in particular. This mode seems to be especially suitable for members of sub-study-groups working within the group, but not only these people.

Once the proposals are accepted, the Programme Committee might approach individual presenters to encourage their connection with others and to group them into a panel.

The possible modes of presentation are:

Individual Paper Presentation  
Interactive Individual Presentation  
Panel  
Roundtable  
Film/DVD

#### *Individual Paper Presentation*

The length of individual paper presentations will depend on the final number of presentations. First-time participants to the Study Group and students will receive a slightly shorter time slot. The length of presentation will be confirmed by January 31, 2026. Co-authorship is allowed and encouraged.

#### *Interactive Individual Presentation*

This format provides an opportunity for participants to learn through doing/to enhance their understanding of the presentation through active engagement. This format also offers presenters an opportunity to be creative in how they communicate their material. Certain types of presentations may be particularly suited to this format. The time allowed for this format is the same as for the other individual presentations. If this type of presentation is planned, the proposal should indicate your spatial needs.

#### *Panel*

This mode of presentation is planned, coordinated, and prepared by a group of 3 or 4

people, one of whom is the responsible coordinator. The proposal should indicate the overall purpose and the role of the individual participants. An extra 5 minutes will be allocated to each panel to allow the coordinator to briefly introduce and summarize the purpose and connections. Each panel proposal will be accepted or rejected as a whole.

### *Roundtable*

These are sessions that are planned, coordinated, and prepared by a group of people, one of whom is the responsible coordinator. The aim is to generate discussion among participants of the roundtable, each of whom present questions, issues, or material for 3-4 minutes on the preselected unifying theme of the roundtable. The following discussion, at the coordinator's discretion, may open into more general discussion with the audience.

Proposals may be submitted for a roundtable consisting of up to 10 presenters, and the structure is organised and chaired by the responsible coordinator. The proposal explains the overall purpose and the role of the individual participants. Each roundtable will be accepted or rejected as a whole.

### *Film/DVD presentation*

The presentation should be no more than 10 minutes in duration and should engage critically with the medium. Key material for viewing should be preselected. At the discretion of the Programme Committee, new videos of longer duration may be accommodated in a regular session (as described above) or may be proposed for other viewing times. The Programme Committee will inform delegates proposing such material of the possibilities of inclusion when drafting the program. Individuals desiring to make such a presentation should send a query to both Programme and Local Organising Committee Chairs. The video material must be made available for onsite screening.

### **Participation “without paper”**

Colleagues who do not plan to make a presentation at the symposium are also welcome to participate. They should fill out the registration form so that the organizers know the number of participants who intend to come. They will also pay the symposium fees.

### **Language**

English is the official language of the Symposium. Participants not familiar with English may present the paper in any other language. In that case, the presenter is asked to provide a translation of the entire paper in English at the Symposium for the sake of wider understanding. We will attempt to make the symposium as inclusive as possible. For anyone who is not confident in English, we offer the following:

1. You may submit an abstract in your native language if you prefer. However, please send it with an English translation as well. A native speaker will read the abstract before being assessed by the Committee.
2. All discussions after presenting your paper can be led in your native language if you prefer (provided that we can find a translator of the given language). Please let us know in advance so the local organising committee can organize translators on site.

3. The Programme Committee will arrange for experienced volunteers to work with you to help in English editing and content advice, if you wish (for abstracts that are submitted by the 15 October deadline).

### **Additional information**

The Programme Committee reserves the right to accept those proposals that, in their opinion, fit best into the themes of the Symposium. The selection will also be determined by the duration of the symposium and the resulting programme limitations.

The Symposium website with more information will be set up soon.

Questions regarding registration, accommodation, travel, etc. should be directed to Konstantinos Dimopoulos, Chair of the Symposium Organising Committee ([kdimopoulos@phed.uoa.gr](mailto:kdimopoulos@phed.uoa.gr)). Questions dealing with the programme (presentation modes, submitting a proposal etc.) can be addressed to the Co-Chairs ([ICTMD.prog.Trikala.2026@etik.com](mailto:ICTMD.prog.Trikala.2026@etik.com)). Questions related to ICTMD membership should be directed to the Secretariat (<https://www.ictmusic.org/membership> or [secretariat@ictmd.org](mailto:secretariat@ictmd.org)) and related to Study Group membership to the Secretary and Chair of the Study Group on Ethnochoreology ([andriyn@ualberta.ca](mailto:andriyn@ualberta.ca), [placida.staro@gmail.com](mailto:placida.staro@gmail.com))

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