



Springback
Magazine
Academy
Assembly
Alliance

2015–2025 **Spreading the word
around dance**



This short publication marks 10 years of the Springback project.

Our main feature is a wide-ranging essay by guest author Professor Rudi Laermans, who we invited to share his views and experiences of the places and practices of dance writing today. Do read it. Whatever your own perspectives, you are sure to find it stimulating and thought-provoking.

There is also a brief summary of what Springback is, plus reflections on the project by six core members of the Springback team.

What of the hundred Springbackers who have taken part to date? They are the writers who contribute to the Magazine, the people who participate in Assemblies and Alliance projects, and all of them are listed, by year of entry, in the Academy section. Thanks to each and every one of you!

Finally, deep and lasting thanks to the team of Aerowaves Europe, our parent organisation: Roberto Casarotto and Elisabetta Bisaro (co-directors), Anna Arthur (executive director), Clàudia Brufau (communications), and to our founder and father-figure, John Ashford (1944–2023).

Contents

Springback in brief	2
Critical states	4
<i>Rudi Laermans</i>	
Looking back on Springback	12
<i>Oonagh Duckworth, Sanjoy Roy, Donald Hutera, Kelly Apter, Laura Cappelle, Emily May</i>	
Springbackers	17
Springback Magazine	18
Springback Academy	19
Springback Assembly	21
Springback Alliance	23



Springback in brief



Springback is a growing community of writers, journalists and communicators. We encourage dance discourses, commentaries and conversations that are thoughtful in principle, vivid in presentation, accessible in practice and independent in spirit. We believe that these should be lively, open and enjoyable rather than academic, laborious or insular. And that contemplation, criticism and creativity work better together than apart.

Springback was the brainchild of **John Ashford**, founder of the **Aerowaves** European dance network. Its gateway is **Springback Academy**, a short, mentored writing programme designed to foster emerging dance writers at the same time as drawing attention to the work of emerging artists presented at Aerowaves' annual **Spring Forward** festival. Following a test run in 2014 in Umeå, Sweden, Springback Academy was launched the following year, in Barcelona.

No one imagined then what it has grown into now. From an annual review-writing programme lasting a few days, it now encompasses a year-round edited **Magazine** – especially valuable during a time when publications and editorial support have disappeared – as well as annual **Assemblies** to forge and strengthen discourse and connection between different Springback generations within and beyond their local arts scenes, and co-operation projects nurtured by the **Alliance** network along with other organisations and initiatives.

Critical states

A free-ranging excursion into dance criticism today, with guest writer Rudi Laermans as your guide





DANCE CRITICISM comes in many forms. For journalists or dance scholars it is a job – a task, something one has to do; for me it is an occasional practice. Every now and then, I venture into writing a reflection on a dance performance. I mostly do so out of gratitude, driven by the urge to give something back to the makers and performers whose work – in both the sense of their labour and its outcome – has left me much to ponder. For something, *je ne sais pas quoi*, continues to resonate and gnaw long after the immediate experience of the performance. What did I witness? That question mark may claim me, as both query and sign: as a riddle that seeks not a solution but a clarification of impressions notched into the body, of corporeal archived scratches, folds, loops.

The regularly active dance critic undoubtedly also knows the experience of a performance being so engaging that writing about it becomes an ethical imperative. But above all, I share with them another experience: that merely discussing or thinking about a performance does not suffice to understand the series of sensory impressions that subsequently transform into an a-melodic echo. The murky blend of affects, stray thoughts, and memories one carries out of the theatre can only be clarified through the act of writing.

Dance criticism equals ‘dance writing’ in a different vein than dance choreography. It certainly involves reading, thinking and conversing with others, but it is first and

“

*Through the writing,
one creates lines of
both interpretation and
self-enlightenment*

foremost a textual performance. Through the writing – typing, deleting, adjusting, and sequencing words and punctuation – one creates lines of both interpretation and

self-enlightenment. At least, that’s how I understand my own critical practice. I write to clarify both an artistic work and its performative effects, which have put me in a strange state of confusion, disorientation, even bewilderment – a situation that ‘de-subjectified’ me, leaving me to put myself together again by trying to understand what threw me off balance (I admit, all this sounds somewhat dramatic).

Dance criticism is a complex and hybrid *faire-avec*: discursively working with present traces of an absent reality (every dance critique resembles an inscription on a tomb), fragments of contextual information, borrowed concepts, and other forms of external knowledge, an embodied archive of previously seen



performances... and, of course, possible words that are, in principle, comprehensible to an unknown audience interested in dance. ‘Dance writing’ is the weaving together – the composing through words – of a plausible constellation of these heterogeneous elements. This textualising encircles a work – or an oeuvre – without ever fully grasping both the virtual message which exists within the initial experiential mess and the particularity of one or more performances. To achieve the greatest possible order-through-language, one must believe in strong representation – even while knowing it is ultimately impossible: successful criticism is a successful failure.

Of course, I hope that my words matter not only to myself but also inform others, spark curiosity, or perhaps

“

*If I am not convinced
by what I write, then
I cannot persuade
the reader either*

even provide fellow spectators with words to articulate their own experiences. As such, dance criticism is a textual practice that tries to transform a personal not-knowing into a shared

knowing. Yet, I am always the first reader. If I am not convinced by what I write because too many impressions or memories have fallen off the writing desk, then I cannot persuade the reader either.

WRITING TIME distinguishes short-term and long term-criticism, roughly corresponding to the pressure to be fast and concise on the one hand, and the ability to write at one’s own pace, with more than 500 to 1000 words, on the other. Indeed, a brief review penned down the evening after a premiere differs from a more extended reflection in a magazine. That same performance can also find its way into a broader argument about contemporary dance within the context of an essay or academic article (where the line between criticism and mere analysis is often quite thin). Different genres, different demands, different stylistic possibilities, and above all different temporalities: the amount of time available is a decisive production factor in intellectual labour.

Another distinguishing aspect, which specifically shapes writing on dance and theatre, are the diverging memories one draws upon in short- and long-term criticism. There is always a temporal gap between seeing and writing. As a dance critic, you necessarily write in the past tense: the performance is over. The short-term critic thereby mobilises a personal, embodied memory; the long-term critic, by contrast, has time to consult external memories, in the form of one or more recordings. One can even write about contemporary dance performances one has not witnessed live. But I wonder whether this



still remains within the register of dance criticism; perhaps one has shifted into the domain of art history.

Short-term and long-term criticism operate within different economies and infrastructures. Here, the precarious, underpaid or unpaid freelancing journalist working to tight deadlines; there, the university dance scholar with research time, though often without the stability of a permanent position. Somewhere in between stands the critic who, thanks to alternative sources of income, such as a half-time job in art education, can occasionally carve out time to write an essay. It is too often forgotten that this configuration is relatively recent, especially in the context of contemporary dance.

It was only during the 1980s that an independent field for contemporary dance began to take shape in Europe, with its own venues for creation and presentation, distinct subsidy streams, autonomous educational programmes, and a genealogy and canon of its own (within which Judson Dance occupies a pivotal role). In its wake, during the 1990s, dance studies gradually emancipated itself from theatre studies and positivist dance historiography. At the same time, the neoliberal deregulation of labour gained full traction. The number of positions on the cultural editorial boards of newspapers and magazines began to shrink, a trend

only accelerated after the turn of the century by the digitalisation of the media landscape. The end result was twofold: the intellectualisation (or, more negatively, the academisation) of long-term criticism, and the precarisation of short-term criticism. This created a



The meagre compensation rarely translates into symbolic capital that could one day be cashed in

growing divide, leaving many individuals caught in a split. They studied dance theory, yet write as freelancers for broader platforms, unable to fully capitalise on their expertise. This breeds frustration, compounded by the reality of being underpaid and underappreciated:

the meagre compensation of journalistic art criticism rarely translates into the steady accumulation of symbolic capital that could one day be cashed in.

The project economy dominating short-term criticism has also increased the number of hybrid workers who balance criticism with doing dance dramaturgy, curating, writing publicity texts, or giving introductions before a performance. This multi-positionality heightens the potential for role conflicts. Can I still write about the works of a dance artist while working



as a dramaturge for their production? (I do, but in a distanced, essayistic manner, and I always disclose my role as a sounding board.) Or, how independent can one be when serving as a commission member to evaluate a grant application from a choreographer whom you have long praised in your writing? These and related dilemmas are usually discussed behind the scenes. They all point to the same question: where does independent criticism end when multiple engagements are, more often than not, economically unavoidable? No universal answer can be offered, but a reflexive and situationally informed ethical stance is crucial, allowing us to legitimise our position to others. It also seems essential to clearly identify potential conflicts of interest.

ART CRITICISM always operates in the space between description, interpretation and evaluation. No audience member ever has the luxury of fully capturing a dance performance, both in its entirety and in its finer details. For the critic, selectivity is essential, driven by the constellation you aim to create and the need to evoke. Both journalistic and essayistic criticism indeed belong to the realm of the impressionistic sketch: a series of focused observations through which an image of the whole emerges. Dance criticism constantly navigates the tension between part and

whole: deciding which aspects to describe, and which to leave out, in order to convey a sufficient impression of the entire work.

There is, of course, yet another tension. Between a movement or gesture and its possible meaning



Our earliest artistic encounters lay down the sediment that guides us throughout our lives

(or between form and content, signifier and signified) lies an unbridgeable gap, a void that can always be filled with 1 + n interpretations. With every slice

of description comes the question: what does it mean? Or rather: how does one narrow the range of possible meanings in a plausible way? Our cultural archive plays a crucial role here. Beyond the dance performances already witnessed, our overall personal experience acts as a partially conscious and mostly semi- or unconscious guide. The books read, the films watched, the pictures, sculptures, or installations encountered in museums – all of these, taken together, form a resonance chamber that generates cues for understanding the meaning of a performance.

We must remain self-reflexive when engaging with the sounds emanating from our resonance chamber.



Our earliest artistic encounters lay down the sediment that guides us throughout our lives: every new experience resonates with earlier ones, seeking consistency, alignment, and relative harmony within the polyphony of our viewing and listening journeys. As such, all art criticism is inherently geographically, historically and culturally situated.

I was educated by the Flemish dance wave of the 1980s (read: Anne Teresa De Keersmaeker, Alain Platel, Wim Vandekeybus, Jan Fabre...) and came of age during the 1990s, when so-called conceptual dance took centre stage (think: Meg Stuart, Jérôme

Bel, Boris Charmatz...).

“

Every new artistic generation finds and cultivates its own critical allies

This background continues to influence my dance writing and, more crucially, at times hinders my ability to empathise with the performances of young creators or emerging trends.

That's not necessarily a problem: every new artistic generation finds and cultivates its own critical allies. However, it does collide with the foundational ideology of art criticism, which often gravitates toward *jeunisme*, the embracing of newcomers as, by definition, 'very interesting'. We may live in postmodern times, but also much of dance criticism still carries the

weight of present-centrism and the yardstick of contemporaneity – the ever-persistent modernist belief that the newest generation represents an artistic avant-garde, addressing today's most pressing issues and creating work in sync with our time.

THERE IS a long-standing tradition, dating back to the Enlightenment and siding with the notion of Truth, that frames judgement as a relation of force between criticism and the criticised. This form of strong criticism revels, and even thrives on, pointing out implicit premises, uncovering blind spots, and exposing hidden agendas. The dance critic 'sees better', identifying political or moral positions that a performance might unknowingly carry, as though it were moving through a dark space that the critic is eager to illuminate.

However, practising art criticism in the mode of ideology critique comes with such strong truth claims that it inevitably deconstructs itself in an age dominated by a radically pluralistic perspectivism. Not that exposing a gender or racial bias in a dance work doesn't matter; quite the opposite. All interesting art criticism is also cultural criticism, navigating between the discussed work and its broader societal context. Yet this dialectical movement never results in an unquestionable truth. The days of Solomon-like judgments are behind us: every critique is a humble proposition.



The core value underpinning engaged criticism is not truth, but care. This does not come from an epistemological or, for that matter, purely aesthetical standpoint, but from an ethical one: the critic aims to do justice to the work, which may very well entail a negative judgement. The true meaning of an artwork is undecidable, but it always testifies, with varying emphases, to a particular purpose or commitment, both formally and content-wise. Or at least, that is my premise when witnessing a dance performance. It requires that, in order to care for an artwork, we start with an immanent critique before progressing to a broader contextualisation. A performance fails when it falls short of its self-imposed standards, not because it challenges or outright disregards presumed artistic values and norms. And yes, those very standards are in the eye of the beholder. Though that's not the whole picture.

Artists do, of course, mention intentions in interviews or essays. Particularly in the flourishing segment of political art today, these intentions are often underscored by references to trendy authors and theories. Through the curricula in contemporary dance, the intellectualisation of dance studies has indeed been complemented by a broader theoretical turn in contemporary choreography. The result is not merely a peculiar brand of conceptual dance whose lack of genuine political impact is regularly compensated

by firm moralising. The dance work comes with its own self-explanation that the critic cannot easily dismiss, demanding that it be taken as an interpretive guideline.



Criticism always intervenes in an artistic battleground for recognition and legitimacy

This simultaneously eases and complicates criticism. The work's intent is clear, even obvious. Yet, when that interpretative framework is grounded in identity politics, environmentalism, or social inequality, the artist's commitment to a noble cause makes it difficult to offer negative criticism, or even critical annotations. I admire the critic who can self-reflexively acknowledge sympathy with the cause, but eventually states that its translation on stage fails to convince. This stance is rather rare – or at least, that is my impression.

Criticism is never neutral; it always intervenes in an artistic battleground for recognition and legitimacy, particularly by remaining silent about certain performances or dance makers. Within European dance studies, many elaborated arguments have been advanced on so-called conceptual dance works and, more recently, on pieces aligned with queerness and post-colonialism. Besides a genuine, morally laudable



engagement, there's an intellectual and political affinity at play here, one that prioritises cultural issues over socioeconomic inequalities and in doing so, perpetuates the modernist logic that celebrates theoretical novelty through the lens of fashionable authors. Conversely, less has been written about mainstream dancemakers such as Akram Khan or Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui. Again, while we may live in postmodern times, the modernist disdain for publicly acclaimed art is very much alive, particularly in continental Europe.

Whereas dance essayism often seems on the whole to endorse the implicit canonisation of politics within dance studies, journalistic criticism tends to be more inclusive. Yet, it cannot cover all contemporary dance: selectivity is inevitable, and exclusion the result. One sides, mostly willingly. I have no problem with that: I'd rather see consistent partiality than bland neutrality or opportunistic flip-flopping. A decent critic has backbone, particularly when their own artistic camp is pushed to the margins.

A final thought: faced with a successful work of art, one can only respond with another work of art, as Wittgenstein once noted. That's why finding one's own voice is crucial for a critic. It may take time, but it is essential.

Rudi Laermans is professor emeritus of social theory and sociology of the arts at the Faculty of Social Sciences at the University of Leuven. Since its creation in 1995, he has been involved in the theoretical programme at PARTS, the international school of dance in Brussels led by Anne Teresa De Keersmaecker. He was a regular guest lecturer at various other art schools such as the Design Academy Eindhoven, the Willem De Kooning Academy (Rotterdam), Malmö Art Academy and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts (Copenhagen). He has published numerous articles and several books on social and cultural theory, ongoing societal and political trends, cultural policy and participation, contemporary dance and visual arts. Besides his academic work, he is also an active essayist and arts critic. He often deploys a sociological perspective, but just as often advances a wider view inspired by contemporary philosophy and political theory. Selected books: *Moving Together: Theorizing and Making Contemporary Dance* (2015), *Science under Siege: Contesting the Secular Religion of Scientism* (with Dick Houtman and Stef Aupers) (2021), and the essays *Gedeelde angsten* [*Collective Fears*] (2021) and *Democratie zonder politiek?* [*Democracy without Politics?*] (2024).

Looking back on Springback

*Six Springback Academy mentors on their
experiences of the project's first decade*





Oonagh Duckworth

When trying to come up with a term for the growing Springback community, the only one that seemed to properly fit was ‘family’. The reasons are much more than sentimental. When John Ashford was alive our group encompassed three generations, or almost six decades, from those in their 20s to John, pushing 80. Now Sanjoy Roy and myself are the ‘seniors’ and will be pointing more Springbackers along the new, triple-A pathway (Academy-Assembly-Alliance).

Being part of a family that cherishes each member means we can come together in an open and supportive atmosphere as prevails during the Springback Assemblies. We can air, argue, debate and often disagree about issues that affect us, with people whose lives and viewpoints may be very different from ours but who are still curious and caring and who share a similar eagerness to nourish the group dynamic. And once launched on what is typically a lonely, precarious, freelance career track – the default choice of most writers – it’s not obvious to whom to turn for advice, stimulation, support and feedback. Springback Alliance intends to provide members with that vital missing link across geographical borders and during the gaps between our physical meet-ups.

In this ever-accelerating age of obligatory productivity, ‘deliverables’, sloganism, culture wars and brutal conflicts, these three unique Springback steps now etched in the ‘family’ calendar, feel such a gift – more a lifeline than a luxury. I dare to believe that the Springback AAA path provides hope and sustenance for those who walk (or dance) along it. I know it does for me.

Born in Manchester and raised in London, Oonagh Duckworth spent her adult life first in Paris, then in Brussels, where she is still based. She has been a freelance dancer, cultural journalist and producer/programmer. She is director of Springback Academy and co-ordinator of the Springback project.

Sanjoy Roy

I was a writing mentor at the first edition of Springback Academy in Barcelona, 2015, and I remember being struck by three things. First, we all achieved so much more than we had thought possible. We were working to a very high-intensity, low-sleep schedule – yet we managed to see the performances, write and revise our texts, talk through our thoughts on writing and on dancing, and meet each other both as professionals and as people. We emerged dazed, but enriched – and strangely energised. It’s happened every year since.



Second, it was wonderful to be among people who were watching not as promoters, producers or practitioners, but as audience members – an all too marginal position, in my experience.

Third, since writing is a largely solitary activity and dance writers are very few and far between, we were surprised and delighted to discover that there were others of our kind. Springback Academy, we joked, was a way to cross paths with others who were as lonely and isolated as we were. Haha!

But forget about us; there is a bigger picture. In our current climate, a project founded on international co-operation, that prizes pluralism, is concerned about future generations, and values creativity and criticism in practice, not just in theory – that is something I want to be part of.

Based in London, Sanjoy Roy writes on dance for the Guardian, and has contributed to many other publications. He was formerly editor at Dance Books, and of Dance Now magazine. He joined Springback Academy as a mentor in 2015, and is editor of Springback Magazine, launched in 2018.

Laura Cappelle

Since I joined as a mentor, in 2019, Springback Academy has become a yearly source of hope for me. As a profession, dance criticism is barely holding on in many places, and it can be a lonely endeavour. Yet every spring, over an intense few days, I get to meet thoughtful, creative writers from around Europe, and to engage deeply with their personal way of seeing dance.

Collectively, we lose sleep over choreographic structures and English movement verbs, rewrite a sentence five times on a bus between shows, and talk through our cultural differences and personal histories with dance. Each time, I come out of it exhausted, newly energised, and full of admiration for our Springbackers, whose faith in the artform shines in every article. I learn as much as they do: it is a rare and precious space for writers to come together, made possible by Aerowaves' remarkably committed team.

Based in Paris, Laura Cappelle has contributed to the Financial Times, New York Times, the Guardian and other publications. She was editor of the bilingual magazine of the French Centre National de Danse magazine, and author of Nouvelle Histoire de la danse en Occident – published as both a textbook and a graphic novel. She joined Springback Academy as a mentor in 2019.



Kelly Apter

It's not hyperbole to say that being a Springback Academy mentor is one of the highlights of my year. Firstly, it's an opportunity to see all the fascinating, thought-provoking, often unexpected and occasionally frustrating dance performances delivered at the Spring Forward festival. It's not just the act of watching that proves pleasurable, but the stimulating discussions that follow (both the ones you take part in, and those you overhear at lunch and dinner). The fact the festival takes place in a different city each year is also a gift, allowing us to explore new venues of all shapes and sizes. Primarily, it's an absolute privilege to work with new writers, helping them shape their reviews and refine their language to be the best they can be.

The main thing I've learned over the years, however, is that although I may be their mentor and have more experience under my belt, there are still many things the emerging dance writers can and do teach me.

Based in Edinburgh, Scotland, Kelly Apter is a regular writer for The Scotsman newspaper and The List magazine, and has contributed to many other publications. She joined Springback Academy as a mentor in 2018.

Donald Hutera

The annual Spring Forward festival is one of the linchpin activities of the Aerowaves dance network. But it's also a highlight of my own cultural calendar, and for several reasons.

First, it's a treat (if a sometimes exhausting one) to see so many gratifyingly varied dance performances in a seriously compressed time-frame, and in a different location each year, and in the company of artists, producers, programmers, presenters and peers from across Europe and the world.

Along with these pleasures, however, comes a measure of responsibility, albeit a most welcome one. As an established UK-based dance writer I've been repeatedly invited to the festival to mentor aspirants in that same field via Springback Academy. Mentors and mentees see and review shows together. My job is to help my few charges to clarify their responses to each work. The basic idea is to hone the prose while remaining true to their individual 'voice' as writers. A special challenge: for many, English is not the first language.

The net result is a quickly-concocted, ever-fresh hothouse-style laboratory of discussion, debate, trust, affection and mutual learning. I love the poetry and practicalities of the whole process. What a privilege



to be part of an ongoing, interpersonal voyage of aesthetic, literary, social and geographic discoveries. Long may it continue.

Based in London, Donald Huttera has been writing and speaking about dance, theatre, live performance and the arts in the US and UK since 1977. He writes regularly for The Times (UK), has contributed to many other publications, and is a performer with Rhiannon Faith Company. He joined Springback Academy as a mentor in 2015.

Emily May

I joined Springback Academy as a mentee in 2019, just six months after relocating from the UK to Germany. I was eager to embrace the freedom and collaborative spirit of being based in mainland Europe, and I wasn't disappointed: I connected with writers from Spain, the Netherlands, Poland, Finland and beyond. Many have become close personal and professional contacts.

This pan-European network continues to make me feel at home away from home, sharing the things I love most – movement and words – at the times I need them most. I think of our online 'coronavirus' edition at the Spring Forward festival in 2020. I also remember meeting up with old and new Springbackers in Budapest in September 2024, shortly after being made redundant, and just before my first true heartbreak. It was a bastion

of support during a difficult time. The humanity of dance, the intimacy of watching it together, and the act of discussing it and writing about it, connects people like little else.

Aerowaves and Springback have exposed me to cutting-edge dance and helped me refine my ability to write about it under the guidance of writers I've admired since quoting them in my school exams. It's also led me to evaluate my reasons for writing. Thanks to this journey, I gained the confidence to pitch myself as a dance writer to established publications.

If I had told 23-year-old Emily, on her way to Springback Academy in 2019, that in six years' time she would be writing for the *Times Literary Supplement* and *Financial Times*, among other titles, and returning as a Springback mentor, she wouldn't have believed me. That 23-year-old feels far away now, and makes me realise how much I've grown up during my time as part of the Springback family. It's been directly responsible for many of the highlights of my twenties. I hope I can pay that forward over the next 10 years of the programme.

Raised in Worcestershire, UK, and based in Berlin, Emily May took part in Springback Academy in 2019. Since then, she has written for titles including The Times Literary Supplement, Financial Times, Frieze and ArtReview. She hosts a podcast, Terpsichore, and has moderated discussions for dance festivals across Europe. She joined Springback Academy as a mentor in 2024.



Springbackers



Springback Magazine

Springback Magazine is fuelled by writers who have completed Springback Academy

Soon after Springback Academy began in 2015, participants started saying that it was hugely beneficial to attend this short and intense mentored writing programme, but it was over very quickly – so was there a way to follow through after the Academy finished?

The answer came in the form of Springback Magazine, designed as a step up from the Academy, a kind of graduate publication where writers could continue their writing practice, now within a more editorial framework than a mentoring one, and with payment on publication. At the same time the wider field of contemporary dance in Europe (and sometimes beyond) would be covered, especially the independent and emergent dance scene – giving visibility and attention to a stratum of international dance practice that often goes under the radar.

The Magazine is journalistic rather than scholarly in outlook, aiming to be open to readers who are not insiders within the too often closed world of contemporary dance.

The Magazine was launched in 2018 at Spring Forward festival in Sofia, Bulgaria, with Sanjoy Roy as editor. It has published about 50 texts a year since then.



For several years, Sanjoy also designed and produced a printed Annual edition, but this was discontinued in 2023, and those resources have been allocated to an upgraded website – coming later in 2025!

springbackmagazine.com



Springback Academy

Springback Academy is a mentored programme for upcoming dance writers at Aerowaves' Spring Forward festival

2015 Barcelona, Spain

Clàudia Brufau (ES), Gaia Clotilde Chernetich (IT), Anna Chirescu (FR), Elina Cire (LV), Luke Forbes (DE), Niko Hallikainen (FI), Anastasio Koukoutas (GR), Marie Pons (FR), Mateusz Szymanowska (PL), Louise Tanoto (UK)

Mentors: Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Donald Hutera (UK), Omar Khan (ES), Sanjoy Roy (UK)

2016 Pilsen, Czech Republic

Nika Arhar (SI), Kalliane Bradley (UK), Lucia Fernandez Santoro (NL), Ola Fraitova (CZ), Riikka Laakso (ES/FI), Stella Mastorosteriou (GR), Lena Megyeri (HU), Jelena Mihelčić (HR), Róisín O'Brien (UK), Francesca Pinder (BE)

Mentors: Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Donald Hutera (UK), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Nina Vangeli (CZ)

2017 Aarhus, Denmark

Nadja Bozovic (RS), Cath Carver (UK), Tia Chatzinikola (GR), Anna Dohy (HU), Sebastian Kann (BE), Anna Kaszuba (UK/IE), Daniel Pitt (UK), Ana Vallejos Cotter (IE), Annette van Zwoll (NL), Yasen Vasilev (BG)

Mentors: Monna Dithmer (DK), Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Donald Hutera (UK), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Roslyn Sulcas (UK)



Springback Academy 2016, Pilsen, Czech Republic

2018 Sofia, Bulgaria

Sophie Ammann (CH), Evgeny Borisenko (DE), Irina Glinski (UK), Alexandra Gray (UK), Fotis Iliopoulos (GR), Claire Lefèvre (AT), Alfredo Miralles (ES), David Pallant (DE), Betina Panagiotara (GR), Lotte Wijers (NL)

Mentors: Kelly Apter (UK), Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Donald Hutera (UK), Sanjoy Roy (UK)



2019 Val-de-Marne, France

Charles A. Catherine (FR), Teresa Fazan (PL), Suzanne Frost (UK/DE), Beatrix Joyce (DE), Anna Kozonina (RU), John Lyndon (UK), Fox Marttinen (FI), Emily May (UK/DE), Léa Poiré (FR), Jordi Ribot Thunnissen (NL/ES)

Mentors: Kelly Apter (UK), Laura Cappelle (FR), Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Donald Hutera (UK), Sanjoy Roy (UK)

2020 online

Sendi Bakotić (HR), Rachel Burke (IE), Lorenzo Conti (IT), Zee Hartmann (DE/NL), Kosta Karakashyan (BG), Oluwaseun Olayiwola (UK), Greta Pieropan (IT), Jonas Schildermans (BE), Maxine Smiles (UK), Lydia Wharf (UK)

Mentors: Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Sanjoy Roy (UK)

2021 Ljubljana, Slovenia

Jonas Schildermans (BE), Zee Hartmann (DE)

Mentors: Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Sanjoy Roy (UK)

2022 Elefsina, Greece

Bas Blaasse (NL), Karina Buckley (IE), Inês Carvalho (PT), Berit Einemo Frøysland (NO), Plamen Harmandjiev (BG), Georgia Howlett (UK), Hang Huang (FR), Ariadne Mikou (IT/GR), Lea Pischke (DE), Sedera Ranaivoarinosy (FR)

Mentors: Kelly Apter (UK), Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Donald Hutera (UK), Sanjoy Roy (UK)

2023 Dublin, Ireland

Zsófia Bálint (HU), Callysta Croizer (FR), Dom Czapski (UK), Rebecca Douglass (NL), Marie Niček (CZ), Djalil Sultani (NL), Maria Palma Teixeira (PT), Elsa Vinet (FR), Liza Weber (UK), Declan Whitaker (CH)

Mentors: Kelly Apter (UK), Laura Cappelle (FR), Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Donald Hutera (UK), Sanjoy Roy (UK)

2024 Darmstadt, Wiesbaden & Mainz, Germany

Daria Ancuța (RO), Zuzanna Berendt (PL), Francesc Nello Deakin (DE), Fatemeh Esmaeilghorbaninejad (FR), Hannah Finnimore (UK), Robin Lamothe (FR), Luke Macaronas (GR/RS), Simina Popescu (RO), Marina Srnka (BE/RS), Ingeborg Zackariassen (NO)

Mentors: Kelly Apter (UK), Laura Cappelle (FR), Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Donald Hutera (UK), Emily May (UK/DE), Sanjoy Roy (UK)

2025 Gorizia & Nova Gorica, Italy/Slovenia

Dmitrijus Andrušanecas (LT), Greta Bourke (IE), Marta Buggio (BG/IT), Maria Chiara de Nobili (DE), Laura Jasmane (LV), Zala Julija Kavčič (SI), Kärt Koppel (ET), Nicola Mitropoulou (CY), Amit Noy (FR), Sidney Yeo (NL)

Mentors: Kelly Apter (UK), Laura Cappelle (FR), Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Emily May (UK/DE), Sanjoy Roy (UK)

springbackmagazine.com/springback-academy



Springback Assembly

Springback Assembly is an annual in-person meeting in co-operation with a dance festival or season

2018 Ice Hot, Reykjavík, Iceland

Oonagh Duckworth (BE), Evgeny Borisenko (DE), Kalliane Bradley (UK), Clàudia Brufau (ES), Gaia Clotilde Chernetich (IT), Anna Chirescu (FR), Lucia Fernandez Santoro (NL), Donald Hutera (UK), Riikka Laakso (ES/FI), Jelena Mihelčić (HR), David Pallant (DE), Daniel Pitt (UK), Marie Pons (FR), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Yasen Vasilev (BG)

2019 NID, Reggio Emilia, Italy

Evgeny Borisenko (DE), Clàudia Brufau (ES), Gaia Clotilde Chernetich (IT), Lucia Fernandez Santoro (NL), Irina Glinski (UK), Beatrix Joyce (DE), Róisín O'Brien (UK), Emily May (UK/DE), Greta Pieropan (IT), Marie Pons (FR), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Lotte Wijers (NL), Annette van Zwoll (DE)

Interviews: Claire Lefèvre (AT)

Co-ordinator: Oonagh Duckworth (BE)

2021 CODA, Oslo, Norway

Clàudia Brufau (ES), Zee Hartmann (DE/NL), Anna Kozonina (FI), Riikka Laakso (ES/FI), Stella Mastorosteriou (GR), Oluwaseun Olayiwola (UK), Greta Pieropan (IT), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Jordi Ribot Thunnissen (NL/ES), Yasen Vasilev (BG), Lydia Wharf (UK)

Co-ordinator: Oonagh Duckworth (BE)

2022 In Movement, Brussels, Belgium

Evgeny Borisenko (DE), Charles A. Catherine (FR), Anastasio Koukoutas (GR), Anna Kozonina (FI), Lena Megyeri (HU), Greta Pieropan (IT), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Yasen Vasilev (BG), Lydia Wharf (UK)

Co-ordinator: Oonagh Duckworth (BE)



Springback Assembly 2021, Oslo, Norway

© Oonagh Duckworth



2022 Oktoberdans, Bergen, Norway

Inês Carvalho (PT), Gaia Clotilde Chernetich (IT), Plamen Harmandjiev (AT/BG), Zee Hartmann (DE/NL), Georgia Howlett (UK), Hang Huang (FR), Beatrix Joyce (DE), Riikka Laakso (ES/FI), Jelena Mihelčić (HR), Ariadne Mikou (IT/GR), Oluwaseun Olayiwola (UK), Sadera Ranaivoarinosy (FR), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Lydia Wharf (UK)

Co-ordinators: Yasen Vasilev (BG), Oonagh Duckworth (BE)



Springback Assembly 2023, Rovereto, Italy

© Clàudia Brufau

2023 Oriente Occidente, Rovereto, Italy

Zsófia Bálint (HU), Clàudia Brufau (ES), Karina Buckley (IE), Dom Czapski (UK), Rebecca Douglass (NL), Plamen Harmandjiev (AT/BG), Georgia Howlett (UK), Beatrix Joyce (DE), Kosta Karakashyan (BG), Stella Mastorosteriou (GR), Ariadne Mikou (IT/GR), Róisín O'Brien (UK), Oluwaseun Olayiwola (UK), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Djalil Sultani (NL), Liza Weber (UK), Lydia Wharf (UK)

Co-ordinators: Gaia Clotilde Chernetich (IT), Oonagh Duckworth (BE)

2024 Budapest, Hungary

Daria Ancuța (RO), Inês Carvalho (PT), Francesc Nello Deakin (DE), Fatemeh Esmailghorbaninejad (FR), Hannah Finnimore (UK), Plamen Harmandjiev (AT/BG), Georgia Howlett (UK), Beatrix Joyce (DE), Robin Lamothe (FR), Stella Mastorosteriou (GR), Emily May (UK/DE), Oluwaseun Olayiwola (UK), Sanjoy Roy (UK), Jordi Ribot Thunnissen (NL/ES), Djalil Sultani (NL), Ingeborg Zackariassen (SE/NO)

Co-ordinators: Lena Megyeri (HU), Oonagh Duckworth (BE)



Springback Alliance

Springback Alliance mobilises connections within our network to support co-operation projects and partnerships

The Alliance recognises a development that grew organically: facilitated, paid collaborations between committed Springback members who have attended Assemblies and written for the Magazine, and other projects and organisations. It draws strength from relations of peer support and networks of competence that have emerged through Springback, offering mutual advice, expertise and recommendation.

Examples of projects include the Exploratorium at B.Motion (Bassano del Grappa, Italy, 2019), writing workshops at Onassis New Choreographers Festival (Athens, 2020) and Palabras en Movimiento (Madrid, 2018–19, 2021–22), and the Re-Think programme at Norrlandsoperan (Umeå, Sweden, 2022). There have also been several collaborations (writing workshops, hosted talks, panels) with Czech Dance Platform.



Exploratorium 2019, Bassano del Grappa, Italy

© Oonagh Duckworth

