



TOOL BOX

**Social and
Ecological
Engagement through
Dance**



Social and Ecological Engagement through Dance

CREDITS

The toolbox was developed by liminal (Athens, Greece) and l'éveilleur (Avignon, France) within the framework of the European project SEED – Social and Ecological Engagement through Dance, funded by the Erasmus+ Programme.

Conceptual framework, authorship and editorial coordination of the toolbox

© Iliana Fylla

in collaboration with Medie Megas and Laura-Lou Rey

This publication constitutes the official reference version of the SEED Toolbox.

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CREDITS

The SEED project is based on an interdisciplinary collaboration between artists, researchers and cultural professionals.

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- Medie Megas: inclusive choreographic practice, dance pedagogies, artistic and dramaturgical support
- Christos Papamichail: creative accessibility, spatial accessibility and inclusive design
- Laura-Lou Rey: sustainability and ecological transitions in the cultural sector, collaborative methodologies and development of sustainable artistic projects.

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Refer to the toolbox

« The toolbox was developed by liminal (Athens, Greece) and l'éveilleur (Avignon, France) within the framework of the European project SEED - Social and Ecological Engagement through Dance, funded by the Erasmus+ programme. The conceptual framework, authorship and editorial coordination of the toolbox were led by Iliana Fylla with Medie Megas and Laura-Lou Rey »

Film

- Film concept Florine Clap, Iliana Fylla, Laura-Lou Rey
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PREFACE

SEED was born out of a simple yet decisive observation: today, creating 'as before' is no longer a viable option.

In a world marked by profound ecological, social and cultural imbalances, it has become necessary to reinvent the ways in which we create, think about and share art.

Creating today means coming to terms with fragile realities.

Ecosystems that are being depleted.

Bodies rendered invisible.

Voices kept at a distance.

In this tense landscape, dance appears in a different light.

No longer merely as a space for performance, but as a place for listening, for attention, for research and exploration, for emancipation and transformation. A place where the body perceives even before it understands. A place where connections can be reinvented: to oneself, to others, to the environments we inhabit.

SEED was born out of this necessity: to relearn how to create together, in a different way.

CONTEXT

The SEED – Social and Ecological Engagement through Dance project emerges within a context of profound transformations affecting contemporary societies. In response to the intensifying ecological crises extensively documented by the IPCC, growing social inequalities, and the increasing precariousness of the cultural sector, it has become essential to rethink the frameworks of artistic creation and contemporary choreographic practices.

This necessity is also part of a broader movement supported by European networks such as On the Move, Julie's Bicycle, and Europe Beyond Access, which actively accompany the ecological and inclusive transition of the cultural sector.

SEED took shape between Avignon and Athens, through the encounter between two committed organisations: l'éveilleur (France) and liminal (Greece).

This encounter marked the starting point of a shared inquiry: how can ecology, accessibility, and inclusion be understood together - not as separate fields, but as interdependent dimensions of artistic practice?

L'Éveilleur brought its experience of ecological transition and situated modes of production, while liminal contributed expertise in accessibility, inclusion, and choreographic practices open to a diversity of bodies and modes of participation.

From this dialogue emerged SEED's central hypothesis: sustainability cannot be fully conceived without accessibility, and accessibility itself contributes to the development of sustainable artistic practices.

The project is grounded in an interdisciplinary collaboration between artists, researchers, and cultural professionals, bringing together choreographic practices with research on ecology, accessibility, and situated forms of artistic creation.

Drawing on their complementary areas of expertise - situated choreographic practices, environmental responsibility, accessibility, and cultural cooperation - SEED was built around a shared set of questions: How can we create without depleting resources? How can we make art genuinely accessible? And above all, how can these challenges be addressed together rather than treated separately?

Because within SEED, these issues are not simply accumulated - they are deeply interconnected.

The project therefore proposes a shift away from conventional frameworks by developing a systemic approach to choreographic practices, in which inclusion, ecology, and situated artistic creation are understood as interdependent dimensions.

Rather than merely integrating individuals into existing structures, SEED invites us to rethink the structures themselves, taking into account the interactions between bodies, environments, institutions, and relationships.

Within this perspective, the diversity of bodies and lived experiences is understood not as an exception, but as a starting point.

CONTEXT

These reflections are rooted in a diverse theoretical landscape and engage in dialogue with:

- the philosophical approaches of Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Jean-Paul Sartre, and Jacques Lacan, concerning the construction of subjectivities and social norms;
- Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the lived body;
- John Dewey's conception of art as experience;
- Nicolas Bourriaud's relational aesthetics;
- Erin Manning's research on movement and relationality;
- Étienne Wenger's theory of communities of practice, which understands learning as a collective process of transmission, experimentation, and the circulation of knowledge;
- Tim Ingold's perspectives on artistic practice as a way of inhabiting the world, grounded in attention, relationships, and situated processes of making; as well as Donna Haraway's eco-systemic perspectives.

Within the field of dance, these approaches resonate with the practices of American postmodern dance, somatic approaches, and the experimental work of artists such as Anna Halprin. They also enter into dialogue with more recent choreographic theories that understand dance as a relational, collective, and processual practice. The work of André Lepecki, Rudi Laermans, and Bojana Cvejić contribute to rethinking choreography beyond the production of movement, emphasising artistic cooperation, embodied forms of thought and experimental approaches to making, performing, and perceiving dance.

Together, they contribute to a significant conceptual shift: moving from an understanding of art centred on the artwork itself toward a conception of art as experience, relationship, and process. These perspectives form the conceptual foundation from which SEED explores contemporary choreographic practices as spaces for social, ecological, and relational experimentation.

THE SEED PROJECT

The SEED programme is grounded in an action-research approach, in which each stage - awareness-raising, training, experimentation, analysis, and formalisation - directly contributes to the development of the toolbox.

This toolbox is based on an articulation between field-based experiences, feedback from participants and cultural professionals, and theoretical and methodological contributions emerging from the project.

SEED aims to support choreographic artists and cultural professionals in experimenting with sustainable, inclusive, and situated artistic practices, while also contributing to the development of a shared ecological, social, and choreographic field of thought, and producing transferable resources for the wider cultural sector.

The project pursues several objectives:

- to support capacity-building among artists and cultural organisations in relation to ecological, social, and accessibility challenges;
- to experiment with accessible, inclusive, and sustainable artistic formats in situated contexts;
- to foster mixed audiences (including both disabled and non-disabled participants);
- to document practices and produce shareable resources;
- to contribute to structural change within the performing arts sector and its production models.

MAIN PHASES OF THE SEED PROJECT

1. Awareness-raising and call for participation (June – July 2025)

This initial phase laid the theoretical and methodological foundations of the project:

- organisation of information and training webinars
- an introduction to the concepts of accessibility, inclusion and sustainability in dance
- launch of a call for applications aimed at European dance artists

2. Selection and networking of artists involved in the project (September 2025)

This phase marked the start of the project's implementation:

- selection of 4 choreographers (France / Greece)
- the formation of the transnational working group (artists, coordinators and mentors)
- preparation of the training programme

3. Educational residencies (October – November 2025)

Two key events shaped this stage and served as an immersive phase for the transnational working group to engage with the project's challenges and objectives:

THE SEED PROJECT

Avignon (16–21 October 2025)

- practical workshops and theoretical and methodological discussions
- immersion in a third place committed to transitions
- participation in an artistic eco-event
- exploration of sustainable and inclusive “new narratives” and “new formats” in dance
- discovery of the artistic world of each participating artist

Athens (18–22 November 2025)

- in-depth training on accessibility and inclusion
- immersion in inclusive artistic practices and experimentation with accessibility measures
- meetings with cultural organisations working towards sustainability, inclusion and accessibility in the cultural sector
- exploring the individual artistic proposals of the participating artists, to be developed as part of the SEED project

4. Mentoring and design of participatory workshops (January 2026)

During this stage, each artist received personalised support from specialist mentors in order to:

- structure their proposals for participatory workshops
- integrate the project’s tools and methodologies
- adapt the formats and content of the workshops to the target audiences

5. Workshop trials (January – March 2026)

The artists delivered their workshops, designed as practical case studies to put into practice the training received throughout the project:

- workshops with mixed groups (max. 15 participants)
- 2 to 4 workshops per artist
- sessions lasting 1½ to 3 hours
- support from a mentor and a partner organisation
- experimentation with inclusive, accessible and eco-friendly practices

6. Evaluation and knowledge transfer (March – August 2026)

This final phase made it possible to analyse the case studies, to bring field experiences into dialogue with the project’s theoretical and methodological contributions, and to formalise them into an accessible, evolving, and transferable toolbox designed to support artistic and cultural practices.

- feedback and evaluation from practice (artists, mentors, participants)
- cross-analysis of practices, methodologies, and case studies
- dialogue with the theoretical and professional references mobilised within the project
- formalisation of the toolbox
- dissemination of results (including a presentation at the Avignon OFF Festival, France, and a presentation at the Akropoditi DanceFest in Syros, Greece)

THE SEED PROJECT

Throughout the different stages, a film on SEED was also produced. Conceived as a complementary tool to the toolbox, it documents the research process, conveys the project's experiences, and makes accessible the choreographic thinking developed throughout this collective process.

Various moments of dissemination and knowledge-sharing also punctuated the 18 months of the project, helping to raise awareness in French and Greek contexts around the issues addressed by SEED, and fostering an ongoing dialogue with professionals and audiences.

SUMMARY TIMELINE

- February 2025 – August 2026: overall project duration (18 months)
- June – July 2025: webinars and call for applications
- September 2025: selection of artists
- October 2025: training in Avignon
- November 2025: training in Athens
- January 2026: mentoring and workshop design
- January – March 2026: delivery of workshops
- March – August 2026: evaluation and data analysis, production and dissemination of the toolkit

INTRODUCTION TO THE SEED TOOLBOX

It is within this context that SEED developed as a space for dialogue, research-creation, and participatory, co-constructed training. A shared milieu that brings people together without homogenising them, and invites exploration of what constitutes the common ground while respecting singularities.

Over an 18-month process, the experiments carried out between l'éveilleur and liminal gave rise to a living body of material: practices, tools, lines of inquiry, but also ways of being and working together.

The SEED toolbox emerges from this process.

It is a methodological and reflective tool, developed from action-research situations, in dialogue with theoretical and methodological frameworks and the contributions of the artists and mentors involved in the project, and designed to support professional practices in the choreographic and cultural field.

Designed as an evolving space, it does not offer fixed solutions, but rather points of support to accompany choreographic artists - dancers, choreographers, and educators - in their professional practices.

It is addressed to all, with particular attention to the diversity of bodies, experiences, and modes of presence, whether or not they involve disability.

More than a collection of methods, this toolbox is an invitation:

- to experiment
- to shift perspectives
- to question norms
- to develop sustainable, inclusive, and situated artistic practices

It is grounded in a plurality of forms of knowledge - theoretical, practical, and experiential - drawn from artists, participants, mentors, partners, and the spaces of reflection that have shaped the project.

It thus proposes to consider dance as a lever for transformation, capable of fostering other ways of creating, collaborating, and inhabiting the world in a more sustainable, inclusive, and situated way.

EDITORIAL TEAM

The SEED Toolbox emerges from the intersection of different fields of knowledge and practice. The following contributors bring together perspectives from cultural management, artistic theory and research, choreography, education and accessibility, reflecting the interdisciplinary approach at the core of the project.



Iliana Fylla

PhD in Art History, researcher, educator and cultural mediator, Iliana Fylla works across contemporary dance studies, artistic research, creation and cultural practices. Her research explores embodied narratives, memory, transmission and the role of dance as a social, ecological and relational field.



Medie Megas

MA of arts in Contemporary Dance, dancer, choreographer and educator, Medie Megas has developed artistic and pedagogical practices at the intersection of dance and disability since 2013. His work explores inclusive approaches to movement, embodied knowledge and the development of accessible artistic processes.



Laura-Lou Rey

State Diploma in Dance Teaching and MA in cultural project management and dancer, Laura-Lou Rey develops practices at the intersection of performing arts, ecological transition and social innovation. Her work focuses on supporting cultural transformation through participatory approaches, training processes and the development of sustainable artistic practices.

READING GUIDE

Enter...

These principles are usually shared at the start of SEED dance workshops.
They create a space for practice, mindfulness and connection.
Here, they can also guide you as you begin to explore this toolbox.
Like another way to begin.
Like a reading workshop.
Connections emerge between dance and reading –
not to be explained but to be left to engage in dialogue.

Every body – like every gaze, every thought – is legitimate.
Every body – like every person – is a knowledge holder.
The collective does not erase individuality.
There is no right or wrong.
Movement – like reading – is not a performance, but a relationship.
Experience takes precedence over form.
Dance – like reading – can be co-created.
Consent is essential. It is an ongoing process and may change over time.
Listening is an artistic skill.
Rest is an action.
To observe is already to participate.

You are free to explore this toolbox in your own way.
Stop. Go back. Skip pages.
Take what resonates. Leave the rest.
Read with your body, your own pace, your own attention.
Here too, there is no right way to do things.

Situate yourself...

This toolbox was born out of a need:
the need to rethink artistic practices in a context of ecological, social and cultural transformations.
It is aimed at choreographers, but also at anyone who wishes to reflect on their way of creating, transmitting, communicating, producing or collaborating.
It does not offer a model to follow.
It does not seek to dictate practices or shape thinking.
Rather, it opens up a space for thought and exploration.
A space to explore, question and shift perspectives.

READING GUIDE

Through the content of this toolbox, different tensions may emerge:
between commitment and creative freedom,
between responsibility and desire,
between transformation and uncertainty.

In this context, art can also be seen as a space for sensitive and political positioning, capable of opening up imaginations, shifting narratives and making often-invisible realities perceptible.

These tensions are not problems to be solved, but experiences to be navigated.

This toolbox invites us to broaden our perspectives.

To consider ecological and social issues not as external constraints,
but as dimensions already present within artistic practices.

It proposes approaching these questions in a systemic way, attentive to the relationships between bodies, environments, working contexts and artistic forms.

It pays particular attention to the diversity of bodies, experiences and ways of being in the world,

including those of people with disabilities,

not as exceptions to be integrated,

but as starting points for rethinking existing frameworks.

It can be used to:

open up spaces for reflection,

change practices,

challenge habits,

imagine other ways of creating and working collectively.

It can also support the emergence of multiple imaginaries – critical, situated, sometimes uncomfortable, but also desirable –

without adopting an exclusively catastrophic view of the transformations underway.

It can also serve to:

name what is already present,

bring intuition to the surface,

or simply support a process of exploration.

Without seeking to convince...

Without seeking to simplify.

But by making room for complexity,

for doubts,

and for possibilities.

READING GUIDE

Navigate...

This toolbox offers different ways of being explored.
There is no prescribed order, nor a single pathway.
It has been conceived as a set of flexible resources,
to be activated according to each person's context, needs, and timing,
and revisited throughout one's practice.

It is composed of thematic entries,
designed to be consulted and printed,
which you may explore individually or integrate into a longer-term process.
Each entry addresses a specific topic,
while remaining connected to the others.
Links, resonances, and cross-connections can be made between them.
Some may resonate immediately,
while others may require time,
or find their relevance later,
through experience and changing contexts.

Each entry is organised around several components:

A theoretical section

providing background and a definition of the topic addressed.

Suggested actions and tools

offering possible directions through methods, resources, and practices, without prescribing objectives or expected outcomes.

Artistic and cultural references

inviting readers to broaden their perspectives and enrich their imaginaries.

The entries are organised around three main thematic areas that structure the toolbox:

POSTURES

Where do we stand? What do we support?

FORMATS & ARTISTIC DISPOSITIFS

How can we organise the conditions of the choreographic experience?

GESTURES OF CARE

How can we act with care ?

These thematic areas are not compartmentalised.
They may be explored independently or in relation to one another,
depending on the situations encountered.

READING GUIDE

Each offers a different perspective: POSTURES situates the reflection, FORMATS and et artistic dispositifs examines the conditions through which artistic experiences are shaped, and GESTURES of care explores how these intentions can be put into practice throughout the different stages of a process..

The connections between the fact sheets are intentional, encouraging movement across different levels of reading.

A fourth thematic area, NARRATIVES – How do we create meaning? – runs throughout this Toolbox.

Questions relating to meaning-making, imaginaries, perception, dramaturgies, memory, and forms of transmission are woven throughout the different entries as cross-cutting themes. This line of inquiry, which continues to evolve, remains an open field of exploration for future developments of the Toolbox.

Particular attention has been paid to the accessibility of this toolbox.

Its layout has been designed to facilitate both reading and navigation:

colour coding associated with each thematic area, highlighted sections, and a clear visual hierarchy that supports flexible, non-linear reading.

The language seeks to balance clarity with specificity, accessibility with artistic rigour,

while remaining attentive not to simplify choreographic practices to the point of erasing their complexity.

The Toolbox concludes with four case studies devoted to the artistic approaches developed by Estelle Bézombes, Clara Grosjean, Demy Papathanasiou, and Maria Vlachou.

Drawn from the experiments carried out throughout the project,

they provide concrete illustrations based on workshop processes and artistic approaches.

They reveal different ways of appropriating the tools,

transforming them, and adapting them to specific contexts.

These accounts take the form of situated narratives,

closely reflecting the voices of the artists who developed them.

They offer insight into singular creative processes:

ways of creating, transmitting, engaging with participants,

and articulating artistic intentions with ecological and social concerns.

They are not intended as models to be replicated,

but as points of support,

fragments of experience,

and possible openings.

READING GUIDE

You are invited to move freely between the entries and the case studies,
to go back and forth,
to weave your own connections,
and to build your own path through the toolbox.

The Toolbox is also accompanied by a film.

Rather than documenting the encounters and workshops as an archive, the film offers another way of sharing the project.

Through bodies, gestures, voices, and the environments encountered throughout the project, it offers a sensory experience of the research developed within SEED and of the gradual emergence of a shared conceptual landscape.

READING GUIDE

Engage...

This toolbox can be activated in multiple ways,
depending on contexts and individual sensitivities.
It can accompany subtle shifts, sometimes barely visible,
in the ways of doing, choosing and paying attention.

To commit, in this context, does not mean complying with an obligation
or reaching a predefined goal.
It can begin in unexpected places.
In a moment of attention.
In a way of reading.
In a choice, sometimes a small one, that shifts a habit.

The proposals shared in this toolbox
can be taken up, transformed, and adapted
according to contexts and individual lived realities.
They are not meant to be applied as ready-made solutions,
but to be experimented with, reimagined, and sometimes even challenged.

Engaging can also mean:
taking the time to try,
to adjust,
and to remain open to not knowing immediately.

Some pathways may resonate immediately,
while others may remain open,
ready to be revisited or reactivated at a later time.

This toolbox can thus become:
a starting point,
a support for experimentation,
or a space for reflection in motion.

It is not meant to be static.
It can evolve, transform, and be reinterpreted.

What matters, perhaps,
is not so much what you will find within it,
but the shifts – even subtle ones - that it may set in motion.

ARTISTS AND PROJECTS
case studies

THE SEED CASE STUDIES

The four case studies presented in this section of the SEED Toolbox offer a practical insight into the application of the SEED approach and principles through four workshops led by artists from very different backgrounds.

They are not performance reviews, but reflective, analytical and descriptive accounts of choreographic research processes conducted within a participatory, inclusive and sustainable framework.

1. The workshop format as a space for research

The choice of the participatory workshop format as a shared framework for experimentation within SEED responds to a specific methodological and artistic intention.

The workshop is conceived as a space for active research, allowing creative hypotheses to be tested under real-world conditions, and to observe how artistic proposals evolve through interaction with participants, contexts and situations.

This format also shifts the traditional roles in choreographic creation: participants are not merely performers or spectators, but become contributors to the process. The workshop thus becomes a space for co-creation, where knowledge and experiences circulate and are shared.

It also provides an ideal setting for practically exploring issues of inclusion and accessibility. The diversity of bodies, abilities and modes of participation encourages artists to adapt their proposals in real time, highlighting the conditions necessary for broader participation. Finally, the workshop allows us to explore the dimensions of sustainability in artistic practice: time management, attention to rhythms, choice of materials, and relationships with the group and the context. These elements are not merely conceptualised, but tested through experience.

In this sense, the workshop format emerges as a key tool for articulating artistic research, collective experimentation and the production of shareable knowledge. It forms the common basis for the case studies presented in this Toolbox

THE SEED CASE STUDIES

2. Context and objectives of the workshops

As part of the SEED project, each artist was invited to design and lead a research and creation workshop that formed part of their personal artistic practice, linked to an existing project or one currently under development.

The objectives of these workshops were:

- To put into practice the founding values of SEED: sustainability, inclusion, accessibility and responsible engagement through dance and shared creation.
- To explore the sensory and physical dimensions of creation: relationships with bodies, materials and environments; the interplay between the living and the non-living, the human and the non-human.
- To create spaces for co-creation where participants are not passive observers but become contributors to collective experiences.

Each workshop thus functioned as a living laboratory, where perception, bodily experience, artistic media and critical reflection converge. It enables artists to experiment and refine their research hypotheses, and allows participants to explore their capacity for expression within open and inclusive artistic worlds, and how artistic choices, interactions with the group and methodological adjustments contribute to building situated, inclusive, accessible and sustainable practices.

3. A shared methodological framework

The proposed format was common to all artists: a series of sessions organised according to the artist's needs and the possibilities of the SEED project, centred on participatory and inclusive approaches.

This framework is based on three complementary dimensions:

- Collaborative: artists receive methodological support to adapt their practices and integrate the issues of sustainability, inclusion and accessibility.
- Participatory: participants actively contribute to shaping the experience, drawing on their own abilities, experiences and sensibilities.
- Experimental: time, space and materials are treated as research variables, to explore relationships with the body, the collective and the local area.

The workshops have been designed to welcome mixed audiences in order to foster the emergence of ephemeral micro-communities where sharing and collective experimentation are at the heart of the process.

THE SEED CASE STUDIES

4. Cross-cutting methodological principles

Beyond the specificities of each workshop, several methodological principles run through all the experiments conducted within the SEED framework. They serve as reference points for understanding and potentially adapting the proposed approaches to other contexts.

The workshops are based on a particular focus on the working framework, conceived as an evolving space, constructed together with the artists and the group. This includes the conditions of participation (consent, the option to withdraw, adaptation of the proposals) and aims to create an environment conducive to exploration, trust and risk-taking.

The proposed experiences are not intended as templates to be replicated, but as situations to be activated, the quality of which depends on the conditions established: space, timing, instructions, the quality of attention and the relationships between participants.

A central role is given to the ability to adapt in real time. The artists adapt their proposals according to the group dynamics, contexts and reactions observed. These adjustments constitute an essential component of the research process.

The activities encourage a variety of ways of engaging, allowing everyone to participate according to their abilities and preferences: movement, observation, listening, writing, drawing , or other forms of interaction. Moving between these roles is encouraged to support flexible and inclusive participation.

Finally, the workshops give rise to the production of tangible records (notes, drawings, sounds, texts, feedback, objects), envisaged as active tools for reflection, contributing to the construction of a collective memory and the continuation of the research.

From this perspective, the process takes precedence over the result: experimentation, deviations, adjustments and areas of uncertainty are regarded as integral and fruitful elements of artistic research.

These case studies should be read as concrete examples, helping to understand how a creative process can unfold within a participatory framework, and how artistic choices, interactions with the group and methodological adjustments contribute to building situated, inclusive, accessible and sustainable practices.

THE SEED CASE STUDIES

5. The artist's role: a research-oriented approach

Within the SEED workshops, the artist does not act solely as a transmitter or facilitator, but as a researcher-choreographer, engaged in an ongoing creative process.

Their role is to propose a framework and experiential situations based on their artistic approach, whilst remaining attentive to how these evolve in interaction with the group and the contexts.

The artist thus navigates between several roles:

- initiating proposals and setting intentions,
- observing and listening to what unfolds in the workshop,
- adjusting their methods according to the group's dynamics,
- accepting the discrepancies between what is envisaged and what actually happens.
-

This approach involves viewing the workshop as a research space in its own right, where the process matters as much as the forms produced. The participants, the materials and the environments become co-actors in the creative process.

The artist is thus led to develop a reflective practice, informed by lived experience. Adjustments, resistance or transformations are not viewed as obstacles, but as resources for research.

In this context, the creative process does not precede the workshop: it emerges from it, through a constant dialogue between artistic intention and collective experience.

6. Role of mentors: observation and putting things into perspective

The role of mentors and observers in the SEED project is to support and extend the research processes, providing context-specific feedback, within a framework of dialogue with the artists.

It is not a matter of evaluating or judging, but of observing:

- the proposals and ideas at play,
- the physical, relational, sensory and structural dynamics at work,
- the adjustments made by the artists and participants,
- the emerging developments and areas of tension, perceived as fertile indicators for the research.

THE SEED CASE STUDIES

The feedback provided aims to open up avenues for reflection, to highlight certain aspects of how the process works, and to connect different levels of interpretation, rather than to guide or validate the practices. As such, the mentors are not external to the process: they take part in it from a different position, complementary to that of the artists.

The mentors thus participate in a shared space for reflection, where issues of sustainability, inclusion and accessibility are not viewed as objectives to be achieved, but as questions under development, which evolve in response to situations and experiences.

Their role is also part of a research process in the same way as that of the artists, albeit from a different perspective. The aim is to support the processes without standardising them, contributing to a deeper understanding of what is at play in the workshops.

These exchanges inform both the artists' and the mentors' thinking, contributing to a shared development of the knowledge emerging from the workshops.

7. Why these case studies?

The four case studies:

- illustrate the diversity of applications of the SEED approach, within a common methodological framework,
- show how issues of sustainability, inclusion and accessibility are translated in practice across different artistic approaches.
- offer interpretative frameworks (methodological and analytical) that Toolbox users can apply to their own practices.

These case studies should be read as concrete examples, helping to understand how a creative process can unfold within a participatory framework, and how artistic choices, interactions with the group and methodological adjustments contribute to building situated, inclusive, accessible and sustainable practices.

Estelle Bézombes



Estelle is a dancer and choreographer of contemporary dance. After training in Athens, Lyon and Berlin, she created in early 2023 the EZO dance company based in France, to develop her choreographic projects. The company EZO carries out creations, research and mediation projects for a wide range of audiences. The company works on themes that touch on our humanity, as beings integrated into the living. The research approach is intended as a dialogue between the interiority of what is experienced and what can be seen and felt through bodies, movement, the visual and sound universe. The research is engaged and inspired by thought and practices of the ecofeminist movement.

Why SEED?

I participate in the SEED program specifically because it aligns with the values and initiatives I'm developing with my company, which I hope to strengthen with new tools. The practical aspect of the program offers a real opportunity to create accessible, sustainable, and inclusive workshops and to integrate them into my practice over the long term. Participating in this program also fulfils my need to connect with other artists and professionals in the field. To build a community that helps overcome isolation and share an enthusiastic, meaningful group dynamic that contributes to transforming the field.

Purpose of the workshops

I propose a series of three workshop sessions as an extension of my research into the connections between the body, matter, and the environment. This proposal is part of my project *Tuning in to the senses*, which is rooted in the living and the community dimension, drawing inspiration from ecofeminist thought and practices. It develops an approach situated at the intersection of dance movement and the visual arts. I work with elements such as sand, glass, bodies, and the environment around us to activate our creativity by engaging different sensory channels. This translation from one sense to another—from touch to movement, from material to gesture, from listening to image—opens up multiple pathways into the practice and makes it accessible to participants with diverse sensibilities.

The workshops invite participants to reconfigure the stage space into a shared, adaptable place where everyone can find their place. The project places the concepts of accessibility and ecology at the heart of its approach, in order to rethink the relationships between living beings in non-hierarchical forms, free from domination, and respectful of both bodies and environments.

The practice thus encourages us to take the time to observe, imagine, feel, and listen—to ourselves, to others, and to materials—in order to reflect together on ways to forge connections between humans and non-humans within a shared, sensitive, and inclusive space of experience.

Link

[Tuning in to the senses](#), company EZO



Formats

Number of workshops: 3

Duration of each workshop: 2h

Workshop dates: Wednesdays, January 28, February 4, and February 11, 2026, from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at the Golovine Theater (except for the first session at l'éveilleur) in Avignon

Audience: Adults – mixed group

Number of participants: between 8 and 10, depending on the session.

Workshop 1: Developing a sensory understanding of our environment

Session objectives: introduce the group to my research and practice, stimulate creativity through the senses, highlight the value of different forms of knowledge and experience, take an interest in the non-human and connect with it in a sensitive way, observe details.

Key steps of the session: connecting with the material, “viewing frame” experience outdoor (sand-glass), leaving a trace of one’s encounter with the material: creatively interpreting the experience using recycled materials and various media (audio, text, collage, sculpture...), getting to know each other through these creations.



Workshop 2: Sound material space

Session objectives: research on the soundscape in relation to the body, the group, and the environment. Connecting with the body, sensations, and breath, importance of relationships with others and with space, exploring a different form of communication and listening. Horizontal collaboration, where every experience is valued in shaping the research, building collective knowledge.

Key steps of the session: exploring sound in various ways, physical and vocal warm-ups focused on breathing, movements on the floor, connecting with others through movement guided by the breath. An experience to build an auditory understanding of one’s environment (without visual cues, using touch and sound as guides), group feedback using a set of feedback cards to place on the large map.

Workshop 3: Interdependence

Session objectives: research exploring the concept of interdependence and horizontality among living beings (among themselves and with the elements that make up the environment) – an analogy with ecosystems, linked to the desire to create a space where reciprocal connections can form, where human can feel like an integral part of the living world.

Key steps of the session: guided physical warm-up followed by improvisation using breath, exploration using sticks as a connecting element. Experiment: creating a shared space based on the concept of an ecosystem—taking creative notes during the experiment and using a glass bottle filled with sand and paper, sharing notes, drawings, texts, and other feedback and observations.

The workshop experiences

We experienced a positive and strong group dynamic and participant engagement with attentive listening, collective intelligence in organization and mutual support. The diversity and resonance among creative proposals in relation to the experiences sparked a desire to create even beyond the sessions. When sharing feedback, individual experiences became a collective experience where we could exchange about:

- the difference between external and internal perception of the same experience (in relation to space, duration, etc)
- concepts of the unexpected, letting go, exploring, or staying within our comfort zone
- how to overcome the difficulty of getting your voice to come out during experiences
- how discomfort in certain positions can transform movement while preserving the essence of the experience
- feedback cards are merely guides; use them or set them aside

For me it was hard sometimes to keep up with the group's pace and provide individualized support when needed, but Iliana and others have been a great help, and it's invaluable to have pairs who support one another.

Adaptation needed

- duration of an activity or an explanation
- using the hands to handle materials or objects with precision
- adapting movements to different positions: standing, sitting on the floor, or in a chair or wheelchair
- help each other formulate and write feedback



SEED issues

Inclusivity: a participatory format where practice and speaking are open to everyone in the way that best suits each individual, with guided practice and experiences, autonomy and mutual support, diversity of proposals, forms of participation, and feedback, in order to build a group and a safe environment where everyone's voice counts.

Durability: listening to the human and non-human through matter, observing details, connecting with the body, sensations, breath, forming a group, relating to others and to space, circle, circularity, empathy, horizontal collaboration, building a new collective narrative.

Accessibility: key concept to me is adaptability. It's something that can be anticipated, but above all, it must be managed in the moment collectively. Empower the group in this regard (even though autonomy can be the very essence of accessibility for certain disabilities). Emphasize on everyone's needs and establish a framework that allows them to be expressed.

Feedback methods

Leaving a trace is an integral part of my research : incorporate moments of reflection as a creative practice at the heart of the lab.

Session #1 - participants' creations, discussion, presentation to the group
 Session #2 - group feedback using the feedback card game, place ideas on a larger map together
 Session #3 - take notes during the experiment, use these notes as material for the experiment.

Perspectives

My research can take many forms, but at its core lies the desire to connect with others. The workshops inspired me to explore new ideas for sharing with audiences through participatory performances.

And as I conclude the SEED laboratory experience, I read these words by Leï-la Barkaoui, which sum it up perfectly: *"Ecofeminism as a theoretical and practical matrix from which we can draw, and then nourish in return. A circular system, a circle, a cycle that takes on our experiences, our knowledge, our doubts, our sorrows, and the answers we have found."* Excerpt from "Des paillettes sur le compost" by Myriam Bahaffou. As I continue my research, I would like to explore more deeply the connection between my practice of dance improvisation and the methods I have encountered, that could enrich my research.

Participant feedback bilan

It emerged that the participants were seeking to immerse themselves in an inclusive creative process in order to share group experiences. They were also able to share some of the challenges they faced. They "discovered new practices that free the body through uncontrolled movement", were "grateful for these immersions in diverse artistic atmospheres that reveal the power of the imagination and a choreographic approach based on sensations", they felt they could "belong to a group and discover other ways to communicate", in relationship to more "awareness about living beings".

A word from the mentors

Estelle's research offers a compelling example of how an ecofeminist choreographic practice can activate many of SEED's core principles through a participatory, research-based format. Rather than addressing sustainability, inclusion and accessibility as separate objectives, she proposes a systemic space of exploration where bodies, materials, environments and relationships continuously shape one another.

Her practice resonates particularly with SEED's notions of the process-oriented, protocol-based practice, hospitality, equity, the open and adaptable, and the situated. Through movement, touch, sound, visual creation and encounters with materials, participants develop situated, horizontal and non-normative forms of knowledge. Sand, glass, sticks and sound are not simply artistic media but relational agents that transform perception while fostering new relationships between humans, non-humans, the living and the non-living.

A major contribution of this research lies in its capacity to multiply entry points into the artistic experience. By combining movement, voice, writing, drawing and tactile exploration, the workshops create multimodal forms of participation that broaden accessibility while preserving artistic complexity. The creative feedback methods further strengthen this approach by making reflection itself a collective practice of knowledge production and shared authorship.

The research also suggests valuable perspectives beyond the workshop format. Its sensory devices, material explorations and feedback practices could evolve into performances or installations offering multiple ways of engaging with the work. Making the ecological life cycle of materials more explicit could further reinforce an approach that already understands matter as an active component of creation, shaping perception, relationships and our ways of inhabiting a shared world.



Clara is a dancer and choreographer based between Lyon and in Roya Valley, in the Alps. She trained in contemporary dance in different schools in Europe and hold a Bachelor of Arts from Amsterdam University of the Arts. She is now doing a Master in Dance Research at University Paris 8. She develops her choreographic projects with the company Sfumato and also works as a performer. Her practice explores the links between the choreography and ecology, questioning forms of contemporary dance and seeking to deconstruct traditional representations of the dancing body, to convey the idea that dance is, above all, an experience of listening, presence and connection.

Why SEED?

SEED presented itself as an opportunity to deepen my research around anthropocentrism and ecology within performance practices and choreography, particularly with regard to my reflections on our responsibility as artists within the climate crisis and the coexistence of humans and non-humans. This programme provides a framework to learn from other artists and other approaches, to broaden my creative tools, and to reflect on forms of creation that are more in tune with social challenges. As I was already working on environmental issues, I wanted to incorporate questions of inclusion and accessibility, in connection with an important stage in my life.

Purpose of the workshops

My intention was to offer a choreographic and somatic practice centred on ecological issues and human-non-human relationships.

These workshops were thought as a research-creation process, linked to my previous work *Les Marées Sèches* and my ongoing research. They were not about teaching knowledges, but rather a shared laboratory, where I navigate with the participants through exploration, sometimes with uncertainty.

I named these workshops 'Environmental Imaginations', inspired by an extract from issue no. 17 of *Raison Publique*, entitled Environmental Imagination(s), which contains Julie Perrin's article 'A kinesic reading of the landscape in the writings of the choreographer Simone Forti'. This article explores the relationships developed by postmodern dancers and choreographers, with specific landscapes and natural environments, and how this influences their approach to choreographic movements and bodily expression.



Link

[Clara Grosjean website](#)

Formats

Four workshops, each lasting 1 hour 30 minutes, from Monday 9 to Thursday 12 March, from 5.30 pm to 7 pm, on stage at the Théâtre Golovine.

Mixed adult group: 12 participants from diverse backgrounds ages, with different levels of experience with dance, including 2 person with disabilities (1 person with autism and reduced mobility, and 1 person with hearing impairment).



Workshop 1

Each workshop started with a moment of discussion and exchange, followed by reading in an 'orchestral' way a text around inclusion and ecology. Then, a somatic exploration based on a small shift of body weight around the body's axis and the perception of support from the floor, with a focus on the space between bodies. It continued with a dance improvisation based on the body's oscillations, transforming the somatic experience into movement.

A period of recording (writing, drawing) followed, to allow participants to reflect on their experience, before opening up to an awareness of encounters with the non-human in everyday life.

Workshop 2

The session began by establishing a framework of safety and consent for working with seaweed, with a plant-based alternative offered, followed by a collective 'orchestral' reading, then a period of somatic and choreographic exploration with the seaweed (touch, handling, setting it in motion, relating to the body and space), before giving time for writing and drawing sensations and thoughts.

Workshop 3

The session began with a discussion circle on the experience from the day before, and ways of encountering the non-human, followed by an 'orchestral' reading of an extract from David Abram's *Becoming Animal*.

The main practice offered a somatic and choreographic exploration of space, beginning with a free warm-up and progressing to a subtle and gradual focus on the body's internal and external volumes, leading to an expanded perception of the room's space, and then to states of radical decentring (being nothing, traversing space, becoming all things).

Workshop 4

The session combined a discussion circle with a theoretical introduction to anthropocentrism and ecological issues in art, and then a collective installation using plant and mineral materials brought in by the participants, leading to improvising a collective choreographic 'garden' blending bodies, materials and voices, and finishing an orchestral reading of the Climate Lens Manifesto.

The workshop experiences

The workshop felt like a space for shared exploration, much like an artist-in-residence programme, in which I was able to guide choreographic and somatic explorations intuitively, adapting in real time to the group's energy and whatever emerged, without adopting the role of a teacher but by establishing an open working framework.

Adaptation needed

My approach involved making my artistic proposals accessible without simplifying them, gradually making them tangible and intelligible through a step-by-step breakdown, and encouraging an entry into movement centred on pleasure.

I invited the participants to listen carefully to their body, and pay attention to the quality of their attention rather than on form of their movements. Unintentionally, there was a rather multidisciplinary and cross-cutting aspect in my approach, where we moved quite naturally from discussion to reading, to dance, to writing, to drawing, and that the connections and transitions between different forms of expression (gestures, words, images, sounds) were straightforward, which enabled everyone to understand the concepts.

SEED issues

This approach supported the SEED objectives of inclusion and accessibility by offering multiple ways of participating, by giving the option to be in or out, and not imposing any movements.

I encouraged individual adaptations to the tasks that I proposed (for example doing the task sitting instead of standing), and offered a variety of media including dance, speech, reading and drawing, as well as a reassuring ritual framework with the discussion circle time.

I paid attention to balance the speaking time (making sure that everybody have the opportunity to express themselves), which raised question on time management, to adjust pace and duration, as more time would have been for some explorations.

Finally, the sustainability of the process was embodied by suggesting the continuity of the guidelines outside the workshop. Theco-constructive approach allowed the participants to actively transform the proposals (guided improvisation, open scores and collaborative research-creation), opening a horizontal exchange of knowledge and shared responsibility for the artistic process.



Feedback methods

Reflective reflection time: a moment allowing each person to record their lived experience in the form of their choice (writing, drawing, diagram...)

Group discussion time: After each experiment, a discussion in a circle allowed participants to share their feelings before I presented my observations. Everyone was given the opportunity to speak in turn to encourage everyone to express themselves, whilst still being free to choose not to speak.

Perspectives

The workshops confirmed the relevance of this research-creation approach as a testing ground for a future choreographic work currently under consideration. The experiments carried out (orchestral rehearsals, improvisations, working with non-human materials, inclusive approaches) offer avenues to explore further and incorporate into my research. The project also opens up prospects for the development of more inclusive, collaborative and environmentally conscious artistic practices, whilst suggesting that the workshop formats be adjusted (longer duration, more in-depth exploration) in order to facilitate a richer unfolding of experiences and co-creation with the participants.

Participant feedback bilan

The feedbacks highlight the high level of engagement shown by participants and the relevance of the activities. The practices encouraged a slower pace, a keen awareness of the body, space and relationships, as well as a heightened sense of presence within oneself and with others. Explorations with materials, particularly seaweed, gave rise to striking sensory experiences, evoking memories, emotions and questions about our relationship with living things. The 'orchestral' readings were also perceived as a way of transforming text into a collective experience, in which the body extends and enriches language. Feedback also shows that the workshops enabled participants to break out of habitual bodily patterns and shift their perceptions, opening up new imaginative horizons.

The feedback from Meije, a participant with a disability, confirms that the proposed adaptations ensured the practices were genuinely accessible. Although exploring with seaweed was challenging due to her autism disorder, she chose to take part and found the experience deeply meaningful. Finally, the feedback given by Éric, another participant, shows that the workshops had an impact beyond the time spent on the activities themselves, by transforming his relationship with his house plants in his daily life, a sign of the experience's lasting impact.

A word from the mentors

Clara's research offers a compelling example of how choreographic practice can cultivate an ecology of belonging, where artistic creation emerges through the progressive construction of a shared world. Rather than representing ecological issues, her workshops invite participants to inhabit them through repeated experiences, rituals, embodied reflection and encounters with the more-than-human. Her approach resonates with SEED's notions of slowness, care, somatic and gentle body practices, ritual and circular formats, transdisciplinary knowledge and immersive experiences. Across successive sessions, movement, discussion, collective reading and writing gradually weave a shared artistic vocabulary in which embodied, theoretical and imaginative knowledge enrich one another. Time itself becomes an artistic material: repetition, cyclical structures and recurring proposals nurture trust, participation and a lasting sense of belonging. A distinctive contribution of this research lies in the creative coexistence it fosters with the human, the non-human, the living and the non-living. Natural elements, ecological texts and collective choreographic compositions are approached as partners in a relational ecosystem, encouraging participants to experience interdependence through attention and shared responsibility. Extending this experience beyond the workshop into everyday life further strengthens its sustainable dimension. The project also offers valuable perspectives for accessibility. Its framework of consent, multimodal participation and progressive transmission creates conditions for inclusive engagement while preserving artistic complexity. Developing accessible conceptual tools, such as Easy-to-Read resources, could further broaden access to the ecological imagination that the workshops collectively cultivate.



Demy is a Crip dancer and choreographer based in Athens. She uses walking and the extensions of her body, such as crutches, to trace new lines in space and reveal overlooked rhythms of the city. In 2025, she received a Culture Moves Europe grant to further her choreographic research through collaborative residencies. Her choreographic practice explores Crip Time, where slowness, resistance, and care become both artistic and political gestures. At its core, her work asks how accessibility, ecology, and interdependence can shape choreographic futures.

Why SEED?

I signed up to explore how accessibility, inclusivity, and sustainability intersect with choreographic practice through disability justice, to investigate how artistic spaces can centre alternative temporalities and bodily experiences marginalized in normative dance. Could centring Crip Time reveal new forms of sustainable practice that resist burnout culture whilst creating genuinely inclusive spaces? SEED offered a framework to explore these questions as fundamental reorientations of how we think about bodies, space, and time in artistic pedagogy.

Purpose of the workshops

The workshops aimed to investigate "crip time", alternative temporality resisting normative speed and productivity. The objective was to shift the body-space relationship: space must adapt to bodies, not bodies to space, a disability justice principle enacted through movement.

Central to the workshop was exploring sustainability through its relationships to time, bodies, and collective practice. By centring crip time, the workshop challenged unsustainable productivity demands, seeking conditions where slowness and pause could be valued as practices honouring bodily needs and resisting burnout.



Link

[Portfolio de Demy Papathanasiou](#)



Format

The workshop took place at Choros of liminal in Athens across two 3-hour sessions (8th and 15th February 2026). Spaces included outdoor pavements, courtyards, the studio, and transitional zones.

Participants formed a mixed-ability collective. Support materials were available, including chairs, wheelchairs, canes, crutches, walls and floor. Participants used printed maps to mark their routes.

The structure built from individual to collective practice through an action, pause and reflection rhythm.



Workshop 1: Walking, Barriers, Crip Time, Perception of Space

Introductions: Participants shared names, pain/fatigue/mobility restrictions, and safety needs. Observation and rest were established as equal forms of participation.

Outdoor Walking: Participants moved at their own pace, marking routes on maps. Participants were invited to consider questions such as: How does the body feel in the city's rhythm? Which points are difficult?

Pause & Reflection: Return indoors. Record experience through words, drawing, movement, or silence.

Indoor Walking & Stillness: Very slow walking, pauses without reason, touching walls/floor/objects. Observing how space changes when the body slows.

Group Reflection: How experience changed inside/outside, what "barrier" means, how time functioned.

Workshop 2: Tools, Supports, Relationships, Collective Time

Check-in: How does the body feel today? Fatigue or pain from previous day?

Outdoor Walking in Relation: Walking as a group, following the rhythm of one slower person, changing distances—care without coercion.

Tools as Choreographic Material: Using wheelchairs, walking sticks, crutches, chairs, walls, floors. Exploring pressure, touch, support, push, pull. Questions posed: How does the body change when given the time it needs? What does support reveal?

Small Groups: Crip Time Scores: Groups of 3-4 creating simple scores—one person with closed eyes, others "looking after" them, navigating obstacles. Rules: stop when someone's tired, change direction if there's an obstacle, no one starts alone.

Final Feedback: In one or two words, describe the essence. Place words in a circle, most representative in the centre. Discuss how perception of space and time changed, how care was experienced.

The workshop experience

The workshops were empowering and revelatory. Participants moved beyond self-consciousness into genuine curiosity about embodied experience. The outdoor space brought negotiation with visibility and the city's demands; the indoor space offered an exhale into possibility. The group held a beautiful tension between individual exploration and collective care.

Adaptations

I abandoned the 30-minute maximum for outdoor walks. Participants marked maps where they'd reached, making "where you got to" valuable rather than "completing the route." One participant did more than double the route, taking time on the return journey; another found a couple on a balcony and stayed with that moment.

The small group Crip Time scores facilitated profound work, navigating obstacles with eyes closed, practicing stopping when tired, switching roles. I trusted that the experience itself is enough; not everything needs witnessing by others to be valuable.

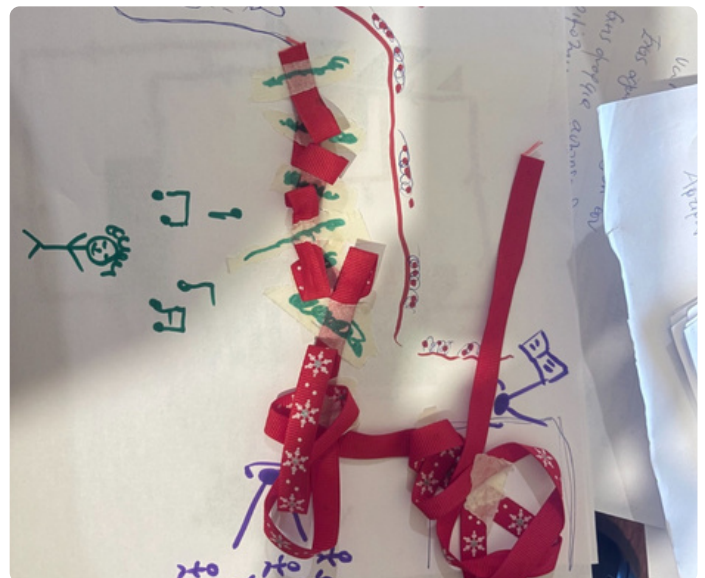
I chose to work through questions rather than statements: "which barriers seemed normal? Who decided they were normal?" This shift validated emotional responses. When Maria shared her initial self-blame about the wheelchair, I didn't rush to move past it. I let it sit, witnessed it, allowed her to work through it herself. This approach recognized that transformation isn't always comfortable and that participants needed space to arrive at structural critique through their own embodied process.

SEED issues

Sustainability: Crip Time rejected constant productivity demands. Creating conditions where bodies weren't required to override limits enacted sustainability, practices that don't burn people out. Slowness was valued as resistance. However, the 3-hour time limit contradicted this. You can't truly honour Crip Time whilst watching the clock.

Inclusivity: Movement and stillness were valued equally. Participants shared through speech, movement, drawing, or silence. They were positioned as co-researchers. Maria's insight about catching her internalized ableism articulated the social model through lived experience.

Accessibility: "Space must adapt to bodies" shaped every decision. Inside the studio, Maria could move with the wheelchair, get out of it, and move however she wanted. The same tool causing difficulty outside enabled freedom inside.



Feedback methods

Multiple feedback moments: immediate post-experience reflection (words, drawing, movement, silence); collective discussion exploring how experience changed inside/outside; final feedback creating a word map with the essence placed centrally. An email option was provided, recognizing that reflections emerge over time.

Perspectives

Future research will explore transforming barriers through direct intervention, moving chairs blocking pavements, creating improvised ramps. The indoor/outdoor contrast troubles me. The studio became a refuge, but I want to explore reclaiming public space. How do we practice visibility as power rather than exposure? I aim to deepen collective Crip Time practices, work with fatigue and pain as choreographic materials, and create public-facing work inviting audiences to experience Crip Time.

Participant feedback

Participant feedback addressed the stark contrast between outdoor and indoor experience. One participant's uphill journey consumed all attention; the return journey allowed her to experience the city. Inside, movement became genuinely pleasant.

The most moving feedback came from the participant who synchronized with Maria's rhythm, describing it as "something perfect that I can't experience at any other moment in my life." This was mutual transformation, by moving at Maria's rhythm, they gained access to attention unavailable at "normal" speed.

Maria's recognition of internalized ableism was profound: "it's not the wheelchair's fault, nor mine—it's the city's inaccessibility. But how didn't I think that?" Embodied practice surfaced ideology in ways theoretical discussion alone cannot.

A word from the mentor

Demy's research goes to the core of the second SEED "posture": the slow / the reduced. 'Crip time' as a mode of being becomes the message itself, transforming our perception of time, our relationship to urban space and our assumptions about other peoples' experiences of navigating both public and private spaces. The walk revealed the highly subjective nature of speed, effort and freedom of movement, as it shifted between the individual and the collective experience. It helped articulate thoughts and sensations that are rarely expressed, if consciously perceived at all, providing, in a sense, "living proof" of the social model of disability.

Striking a balance between listening to, respecting and accommodating the diverse experiences of the different participants of the workshop, and -at the same time- proposing concrete practices and giving clear instructions, is an inherent challenge within Demy's project. In the course of the program, she has come a long way in asserting herself as a crip dance artist and claiming her space (and time) in a densely populated, fairly homogeneous and fast-paced dance world. I believe the ecological aspect of the program's content brought a new dimension to her interest in the relationship of the body to its lived environment and enriched her insight into what sustainability could mean for a crip artist, in relation to effort, endurance and the pressure to produce.





Maria lives and works in Athens as a dancer, dance teacher, and Pilates instructor. She began dancing at a young age and in 2018 received her diploma as a dancer and dance teacher from the Greek Ministry of Culture, while also studying Biology at the University of Ioannina. In 2023, she participated in the inclusive choreography workshop “Making and unmaking dances” at ISON Dance Theatre, creating the choreography “Whose Voice is it?”. Later, as part of a mentored research residency, she collaborated with three other artists around the concept of “In & Out”, using tools such as automatic writing, spoken word, and instant composition. She is particularly interested in collaborative approaches to artistic creation and working in interdisciplinary environments.

Why SEED?

When I signed up for the SEED project, my main intention was to deepen my choreographic process. I already had experience with accessible and inclusive choreographic tools, so integrating sustainability added a further dimension to my artistic approach. I was especially drawn to the program’s process vs product approach, which closely aligns with my artistic values and working methods, as well as to the opportunity to travel, deepen my understanding of the project’s environmental dimension, and connect with choreographers from Greece and France.

Purpose of the workshops

The workshops aimed to develop a structured approach to exploring the voice of our inner critique, primarily in relation to dance. For me, the challenge was to create a process that allowed participants to recognise and observe the moments when this voice emerges, and how giving space to it can negatively affect creativity and, consequently, the way we dance and experience dancing. I also wanted to find out whether it might be possible to “play” with this inner critique, transforming it into something creative and artistically meaningful.

The workshop was based on my choreographic research around the notion of “tough love.” I had previously explored how this mode of criticism, often present in dance education and professional environments, can be harmful to dancers and disruptive to the creative process. Over time, this external “voice” often becomes internalised and, if not acknowledged, can shape the way we speak to others. Thus, a cycle of criticism is created, which undermines those exact qualities which are required of dancers: creativity, experimentation, and openness.

Link

[“Love is tough”, Maria Vlachou](#)



Format

The workshop took place at Choros of liminal in Athens, an accessible facility. The participants were disabled and non-disabled people, and it no previous experience in dancing was required, thus attempting to reach out to different social groups.

It was divided into two three-hour long parts, and each part had a different focus, based on my artistic intention. In order not to exclude any participants, as the two parts were scheduled on different days, they were complementary but also independent.



Workshop 1

The main goal of the first part was to create a process that, in the end, would allow us to go as deep as we could with the observation of our inner critique.

The workshop opened with an introduction circle. With the use of Dixit cards we explored our expectations from this Workshop. We used a ball transferring game as a way to warm up our bodies, familiarize ourselves with each other and create group trust. We then co-created a mind map exploring "tough love" tracing its definition, its role in education and personal phrases from our lived experiences.

These exercises prepared us for the core improvisation task, the exploration of our inner critic's voice while dancing. The task was to observe our thoughts and actively stop improvising and document them unfiltered the moment they surfaced.

Finally we reconvened in the circle using Dixit cards as visual metaphors to reflect on how we felt in the present moment.

Workshop 2

The second part builds on the first, aiming to transform our inner critique into a performative score.

The second workshop opened with a silent reflection on the mind map from the previous workshop, each selecting a Dixit card that resonated with it.

Next, we paired up for a physical warm up, using the ball as a moving point of contact to navigate space and shift levels.

After a brief revisiting of the first workshop's improvisation, we formed small groups to share our written phrases. We translated these judgmental thoughts into kinetic instructions, turning them into a collective choreographic score. As a closure, we returned to the Dixit cards selecting collectively one final image that best encapsulated our shared experience of the workshops.

The workshop experience

The workshops were both moving and empowering for me. Although this was my first time facilitating a mixed-ability group and the subject matter was sensitive, participants responded warmly and engaged openly throughout the process. The group dynamic gradually evolved from hesitation into a trusting environment marked by open dialogue, shared personal experiences, and collective humour. The workshop ultimately provided participants with a deeper self-understanding while introducing participants to a contemporary choreographic methodology that differs from the performative standards commonly found in the local dance scene.

Adaptations

The workshop largely mirrored my expectations, with some tasks received even more enthusiastically than anticipated. My proposals were adapted through two stages: first during planning, based on participant profiles, and second through real-time responsiveness to the group's needs. The structure was intentionally modular and "self-contained," allowing participants attending only one day to engage fully without missing essential stages of the process. Aware of the emotional weight of the "inner critique" and "tough love" themes, I incorporated longer integration periods and gradual task progression to prioritise emotional sustainability.

Minor adjustments also took place during the sessions. For example, when one participant unfamiliar with contemporary dance struggled with the abstract improvisation tasks, I offered an alternative entry point focused on self-observation rather than dance technique. Overall, the group's openness and organic engagement created a balanced and supportive atmosphere, making extensive contingency measures unnecessary.

SEED issues

My approach to sustainability focused on both emotional well-being and material awareness. I aimed to create an emotionally sustainable environment accessible to participants of different backgrounds and experience levels. Resource-conscious practices included using shared or reused equipment and recycled paper for research tasks.

The workshop structure itself was sustainable: rather than relying on rigid choreography, it was built around accessible, modular protocols adaptable to different communities and different levels of experience. Inclusivity was central to the design, with concrete, task-based approaches helping demystify contemporary dance and enabling participants to contribute their unique perspectives, through movement, discussion and reflection.



Feedback methods

To maintain a responsive environment, I integrated ongoing verbal check-ins at the beginning and end of each session, alongside a final Dixit card exercise that provided symbolic, non-verbal reflection and closure.

I also prioritised somatic feedback by observing participants' non-verbal cues and adjusting the task intensity intuitively. Collaborative reflection during the "transformation task" encouraged horizontal, peer-based feedback, while a follow-up email distributed by liminal extended the reflective dialogue beyond the workshop itself.

Perspectives

The next stage of my research will explore the transformative potential of the “tough love” protocol, focusing not only on the impact of the internalised critical voice but also on its ability to generate positive personal and collective change. A key aim is to adapt the workshop structure into a protocol-based work performed by diverse communities and participant profiles. I am interested in bridging the gap between internal research and a rigid performance outcome, exploring how the transformation developed within the workshop’s “safe container” can be translated into a staged form without losing its integrity.

Participant feedback

Participant feedback was overall positive, with many participants highlighting their deep engagement with the tasks and the strong sense of connection created through shared reflection. The group gradually transformed into a supportive collective, allowing participants to engage vulnerably with the sensitive theme of “tough love.” The Dixit card exercise proved especially meaningful, offering a non-verbal bridge between abstract movement and lived experience. ++ examples

Some challenges also emerged and became valuable learning moments. One participant struggled with the abstract nature of improvisation, while another experienced coordination difficulties during ball-based exercises. Rather than functioning as obstacles, these moments provided significant moments of growth and triggered alternative approaches.

Another important outcome was the shift from a traditional “performer-researcher” hierarchy to a horizontal support system, reducing performative pressure and encouraging participants to take ownership of their process.

A word from the mentor

Maria’s research provides us with a great example of a project which doesn’t directly address issues around the environment or access, but benefits immensely from the reflection on these axes, the implementation of certain tools and the use of certain concepts from this toolbox.

Her work aligns with all six of SEED’s core principles: **somatic**, the **slow** and **reduced**, the **local**, the **process-oriented**, the **open** and **adaptable** and the **equitable**. The **protocol-based** format Maria envisions for the future stands at the intersection of the accessible and sustainable approach the SEED program has developed. Also, attention to timing, inspired by notions of “**crip time**,” shaped both planning and responsiveness to participants’ needs.

Enriched by the perspectives of more and more people her work can provide valuable insight into the issue of critique in dance education, its internalised effect for dancers and its power of reproduction in future generations. This research is not only important for the dance community, but the general public as well, since internalising social critique (around weight, body shape, sense of rhythm, personal style) happens in all forms of dancing, including social dancing, which everybody has experienced.

Maria could further explore the environmental aspect or implications of her workshop, by incorporating ideas around the therapeutic, or calming effect of nature into the ‘narrative’ of her workshop, either through the ‘imaginary’ in the improvisation task she leads or through her actual choice of space for the workshop.

SEED FILM

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SEED FILM - Traces of the collective experience

Watch the film: <https://vimeo.com/1208763036> (password: SEED)

Concept : Florine Clap, Iliana Fylla, Laura-Lou Rey

Direction & Editing : Florine Clap

The SEED Film accompanies this toolbox as another way of entering the project. Rather than documenting the project's activities, it offers a sensitive and poetic rendering of the collective experience lived throughout SEED. Through bodies, gestures, voices, landscapes and shared situations, the film traces the emergence of a common space of reflection where artistic creation, ecology, accessibility and inclusion gradually came into dialogue.

Structured around three interconnected chapters, the film follows the different moments of the project - the pedagogical journeys and the participatory choreographic workshops - not as separate events but as successive movements of the same collective experience.

The film seeks to make tangible what was shared: the questions that brought us together, the relationships that emerged, and the common horizon that slowly took shape through encounters.

The film approaches accessibility as an artistic practice rather than as a technical device. Its writing seeks a careful balance between image, sound and text, opening multiple perceptual pathways for experiencing the work.

The film unfolds through three chapters :

Chapter I — Transitions

Pedagogical Journey — Avignon (16–21 October 2025)

The film preserves the trace of the research that begins to breathe collectively.

Chapter II — Creative Accessibility

Pedagogical Journey — Athens (18–22 November 2025)

The film preserves the trace of the research that gradually shapes a shared way of thinking and a common universe of values.

Chapter III — Sharing Possibilities

Participatory Choreographic Research Workshops (January–March 2026)

The film preserves the trace of the research transformed and enriched through collective practice.

A shared adventure

The film weaves together fragments of experiences shared by artists, mentors, participants, facilitators and partner organisations in Avignon and Athens.

It also bears the traces of all the places, communities and institutions that welcomed, supported and nourished the project along the way.

Special thanks to all of them.

OPENING

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This toolbox remains open

This toolbox is an invitation to continue exploring new ways of creating, caring, and collaborating.

Like the artistic and cultural practices it brings together, this toolbox is conceived as a living resource, intended to remain open, evolving, and responsive to new experiences.

If these pages generate new questions, new practices, or new ways of working together, they have already begun to evolve.

You are welcome to continue this movement:

- by sharing your experiences,
- by suggesting new tools,
- or by proposing references, practices, and perspectives that may nourish future versions of SEED and this resource.

SEED encourages the circulation of the ideas and practices presented in this toolbox. However any adaptation, translation, reproduction, or derivative development of this document requires the prior consent of the authors. Please contact the authors before undertaking any such project.

To share feedback or suggestions, please contact:
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