

***Bodylex*: Choreography as Method and Mode in Legal Research**

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1 Introduction

The law manifests as an embodied practice, enlivened only with the addition of corporeal matter (Mulcahy 2021). Choreography, too, is reliant on the body as the vessel through which its prescriptive and organisational properties can be articulated. This shared modality establishes a natural link between the two disciplines, animated by the common language of movement. It follows that an embodied approach to legal research, where the dancing body is the primary tool of inquiry, can reveal new jurisprudential perspectives. These findings – a pooling of physical artefacts capable of reappropriation (Jacob and Macdonald 2019) – enable those both within and ‘without’ the law to challenge its normativity and experience the transformative potential of the law/dance relationship.

As a practising lawyer and dance artist, my work involves an ongoing practice-based inquiry into the corporeal manifestations of legal systems. It is an experimental process that engages textual and aesthetic expressions of the law in a bid to both forge and understand links between the two fields. A milestone in this inquiry was my creation of *Bodylex* (Ryan 2021), a dance work for the stage exploring the relationship between the body and the law. I developed the show using practice-based research that brought cold, esoteric legal concepts

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into a fleshy, sweaty dance studio, and tried to make sense of it all through the instrument common to both: the body.

While the creative development and ultimate stage work serve as the primary research output (video excerpts of which are linked in the endnotes), this paper offers an accompanying textual analysis of how choreography may serve as both method and mode in legal research. It begins by detailing the formal specifications of *Bodylex* and framing this paper as a reflexive commentary on performance-led research. Next, it considers the theoretical framework underpinning the inquiry by positioning movement as the common denominator of the law and the body, and explaining how the law's normativity may be interrogated through embodied means. Lastly, three creative processes used in the project are presented for analysis, namely: the (re)creation of rule-based systems in performance contexts, the transliteration of legal doctrines into movement scores, and the abstract application of legal texts. Importantly, these processes are sequenced according to their scale of inquiry – the relationship between bodies and a legal system (*supra-subject*), legal relations as between bodies (*inter-subject*), and legal regulation of a single body (*intra-subject*). This ordering mirrors the thematic arc of *Bodylex* as a stage show, allowing the reader to experience the choreographic methodology unfolding along the same continuum witnessed by the audience.

Before advancing, I must note that I am trained in, and am a practitioner of, the colonial legal system in Australia and predominantly Western concert dance. While these knowledges underpin the research associated with *Bodylex* and the following commentary, I acknowledge the sovereignty and systems of law/lore of the Indigenous peoples of Australia, as well as their cultural practices, especially dance, which have existed on those lands for millennia (see Langton and Corn 2023).

2 A Case Study of Performance-led Research

Bodylex is a 50-minute dance work choreographed by me and performed by three dancers. It is designed for a black-box theatre and accompanied by an original composition and voiceover artist. The show

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premiered in March 2021 at Dancehouse in Melbourne, Australia, following two creative developments. There is no narrative; instead, the work presents abstract and theatrical explorations of its themes through set and improvised movement. The work is shaped by the sound design: a metronome, which begins before the audience enters and slowly accelerates from 40 beats per minute to 120 over the course of the show, with rhythmic ornamentation but without pause until the final blackout. As a theatrical offering, the work seeks to reveal the complex, invisible phenomena that shape human behaviours, social relations, ideas of authority and expressions of the self.

On its premiere, a dance critic for Melbourne newspaper *The Age* labelled the work a ‘dance essay’ (Fuhrmann 2021) – a somewhat apt description because *Bodylex* aims to have both academic and artistic currency. Here, theatre and performance studies academic Baz Kershaw’s definition of performance as research, as ‘the uses of practical creativity as reflexive enquiry into significant research concerns’ (Kershaw 2009a: 4), is illustrative. It is a methodology that favours ‘action-based investigations’ over ‘abstract theorising’ and which foregrounds creativity to allow performance to exist as a valid and complete form of research (Kershaw 2009b: 105, 107). *Bodylex* is situated firmly within the paradigm of performance-based research, both as product and process. It exists as a theatrical package of provocations, perspectives and dilemmas for spectators, as well as a studio process, where the performing body spent hundreds of hours building physical bridges with legal ideas, and all the experimentation, interrogation, insight, confusion, frustration, failure and boredom that entailed.

When we use the body as the medium of legal research (something quite foreign to law’s predominant language of protocol and specificity), we must direct our attention more to process than product and be open to outcomes that are expressionistic not didactic (Mulcahy 2021: 127). Law academic Sara Ramshaw labels this a ‘process of experimentation that is ever in flux and alive to possibility’ (Ramshaw 2023: 79). *Bodylex* – from the first morning in the studio to the final

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curtain call – concerned itself with those fluxed and fleshy possibilities. Methodical in design but open to chance and vagaries, the process intentionally departed from the law's specific and material forms in search of alternative (embodied) vernaculars to discuss the law.

In support of the absolute potential of performance-led research (cf. Whitton 2009), this paper is not intended to be an interpretive aid or an appendix of rational conclusions prepared by a choreographer about their own show – to do so would undercut the very purpose of using the body as the primary medium. Rather, it is a reflexive commentary on a *process* whereby participants (whether dancer, choreographer, spectator or critic) were invited to make sense of the law in an embodied way to uncover alternative forms of legal understanding and knowledge. And as the performance is the research, it follows that the findings reside within, and are as pluralistic as, the pool of participants in that performance.

To this end, although the paper centres my own observations and analysis as choreographer (and someone 'within' the law as a practising lawyer), it includes the voices of two dancers involved in the project (the third being unavailable for comment) who are not legally trained and therefore 'without' the law. As agents lacking specialised academic or vocational knowledge of the subject matter, but utilised as the primary vessels through which the research was conducted, the dancers' understanding, interpretation and embodiment of the research questions played a significant role in shaping the inquiry. Section 4, which dissects some of the creative processes used in *Bodylex*, presents these firsthand perspectives not only to canvass the breadth of research 'findings', but also to highlight the transformative potential of choreographic methodologies when deepening one's understanding of legal concepts (Calder and Cowan 2008: 109).

Although secondary to the dancer, the spectator is also an important participant in *Bodylex*. While this paper does not offer a comprehensive survey of audience interpretations of the work, such an undertaking, especially one that comparatively analyses different audience types (law-literate, dance-literate, law/dance-literate, layperson, etc.), has

theoretical merit and the potential to capture the full gamut of findings that performance-led research promises.

3 Theoretical Framework

As legal theorist Joshua Shaw writes, bodies are ‘constituted by and constitutive of’ laws (Shaw 2024: 107). The law is formed by an interplay of rules that inscribe and fix to the body (Legendre 1997: 37), without which, such rules remain lame, incapable of germination or application. Bodily expression and bodily encounters – that is, movement – electrify the law. As law manifests as an embodied practice (Mulcahy 2021: 124-5), arguably it can only be fully accessed and understood via corporeal means. Put simply, movement is the common language of the law and the body.

Choreography (the organisation or prescription of bodily movement) echoes this logic, as it also systematically turns ideas and statements into embodied actuality (Lepecki 2010: 37). For example, the words *chassé pas de bourrée pas de chat changement* can be readily physicalised into movement by those educated in the code of classical ballet. Or, if one was to pick up a copy of the popularised handbook of traditional Irish dances, *Ár Rincí Fóirne* (An Coimisiún le Rincí Gaelacha 2000), its written instructions could be followed to dance a *céili*. Therefore, choreographic approaches to the law are logical means of accessing and understanding it. They allow us, through the medium of dance, to unlock what may be called latent jurisprudential perspectives that are otherwise held in virtual reserve.

This framing borrows a concept from American dance scholar Andre Lepecki’s writings on dance reproduction. He theorises that a performer reenacting an historical dance can identify and actualise ‘non-exhausted creative fields’ in the past work through an embodied revisiting of the choreographic material (Lepecki 2010: 31). This logic transplants well to embodied approaches to the law: there are creative perspectives lying dormant within the law, discoverable only through prescriptive and curious choreographic inquiry.

But mere excavation of these jurisprudential perspectives is not the

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end point. To fully realise the potential of choreographic methods in legal research, those perspectives must be instrumentalised. Embodied approaches to a legal inquiry will yield a plurality of artefacts that are physical, emotional, sensorial, kinetic, intuitive, logical, metaphorical and so on, each capable of ‘parallel discovery, reappropriation and deployment within a performative terrain’ (Jacob and Macdonald 2019: 264). Participants simultaneously contribute to and draw from the pool of artefacts in an iterative and experimental process that allows them to first discover their normative understanding of the law, then challenge it. Because movement is the common language of inquiry, any participant with a body (whether within the law or ‘without’) can make discoveries that are equally meaningful, though distinct. For all, this method of casting and re-casting jurisprudential perspectives allows participants to encode, through embodied means, alternative understandings of the law which may be carried forward beyond the immediate context. It is this transformative potential inherent in the law/dance relationship that gives choreography unique methodological value in legal research.

4 Creative Processes used in *Bodylex*

The creative development of *Bodylex* comprised a suite of tools and processes that oscillated between structure and intuition. Each method was conceived as a distinct experiment, formulated with sufficient focus to sustain an independent investigation of a particular aspect of the law via embodied means. The experiments were differentiated according to three scales of inquiry: the relationship between bodies and a legal system (*supra-subject*); legal relations as between bodies (*inter-subject*); and legal regulation of a single body (*intra-subject*). With this broad categorisation in place, the experiments were deployed in parallel, allowing the creative process to unfold in a non-linear, polygonal manner where the success of one tool did not determine the fate of the others. This siloed approach also allowed me, as the choreographer, and the dancers to approach each (sub-)inquiry with an open agenda that balanced structure with chance; guided by a conceptual framework but not bound to a single hypothesis.

When building the choreographic arc of *Bodylex* for the stage, the organising logic took on greater significance, providing a natural blueprint for sequencing the work's themes. The show opens with a wide and metaphorical lens, as uniform and unitised bodies navigate a system of physical rules. The mid-section narrows its focus to relations between individuated performers, harnessing expressivity and emotion to shape the movement. Finally, the body itself goes under the microscope, as we arrive at the most intimate and specific level of inquiry. This progression allows the choreographic methodology to unfold along a continuum, inviting the audience (and performers) to begin from the most open and universal perspective, before eventually reaching a more elucidatory and personal conclusion.

This ordering – both functional and thematic – is mirrored in the following discussion of three creative processes used in *Bodylex*: the (re) creation of rule-based systems, the transliteration of legal doctrines, and the abstract applications of legal texts.

A (Re)creation of Rule-based Systems

One of my creative methods as choreographer was to (re)create rule-based systems in a performance context – a tool situated at the *supra-subject* level of inquiry given its concern with group responses to structural imperatives. The first act of *Bodylex* unfolds in total blackout, as the dancers, moving in very slow motion, manipulate a five-metre wooden plank from which bright light shines downwards. The beam is carried through the air, passed over heads and limbs, balanced on lower backs as the dancers crawl in a straight line, scanned over a prone body that curls and unfolds, and rotated on its central axis as the dancers dodge its low-flying blades.²

Introducing a large prop to the performance arena allows us to interrogate the relationship between object and subject. The challenge of manipulating the plank in unison, steadily and slowly, requires the dancers to find physical solutions (different grips, postures, alignment, energy, etc.) that prioritise the shared objective of sustaining the plank while suppressing idiosyncrasies. In effect, the plank inscribes a protocol that brings order to a group of bodies (Legendre 1997: 66), as its

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weight and cumbersomeness demand a communalised choreographic response. Any expression of individuality or non-cooperation will result in failure (dropping or hitting the beam) and consequence (a loss of theatrical tension).

To this end, the plank objectifies its subjects in the same way a legal system or institution might (Mulcahy 2021: 128 n 141-4); that is, for the regime to function efficiently, the dancers' status must be unitised and their movement standardised. The stage becomes a microcosm of legal personalities – adhering, uniting, coping and adapting – under a system of governance, disciplined by the threat of repercussion. Key here is the concept of power – not just as a metaphor for the viewer, but as a phenomenon instilled in the dancer through the performance of uniform movement (Barshack 2006: 60). Indeed, while the plank's oppressiveness may appear to be inescapable, it is ironically sustained only by those subjects who continue to serve it. The choreographic manipulations, like the power it represents, are indeed reciprocal, strengthened by numbers. The plank thus invites a multiplicity of readings and presents opportunities to both articulate and challenge ideas of power and subjectivity.

But while the choreography serves mostly metaphorical purposes for spectators, the dancers' experience of performing it was one of intense emotion. Reflecting on the opening sequence with the plank in a post-project interview, Dancer 1 observed, 'I remember feeling [that] the stakes [were] so high ... the tension in the simplicity [of the movement] was like being on the edge of your seat'. Dancer 2 described it as 'stressful', adding that 'there was a sense of anxiety ... holding the plank in unison and trying to be as perfect as possible. ... [It] felt like I [was] conforming in a machine-like way'. Despite broad agreement on the emotional experience of this part of the work, Dancer 1 also offered an alternative perspective:

There was a certain level of calmness that came with [the plank] ... I remember thinking, in a way, I don't really have to think right now. I just have to see this thing through that's predetermined and I can take a back seat.

These insights reveal the liveness of the rule-based system created on stage and the genuine emotional response engendered by the perceived stakes. The plank imposed a protocol that required the dancers to not only communally negotiate the object within specific parameters but also regulate their emotional experience of that task. In a similar vein, the law comprises protocols designed to control or protect the emotions of subjects (Mulcahy 2021: 125). For example, core tenets of the rule of law (such as natural justice and the principle of *stare decisis* or ‘to stand by things decided’) create certainty, stability, predictability and order, each intended to provoke emotional responses from subjects (see, for example, Nitta 2001: 798-9). The plank, however, eschews such textual representations of the law for ‘materials, sensations and affects’ (Shaw 2024: 106), establishing what artist and legal theorist Andreas Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos might call a ‘lawscape’: a surface on which the law’s normativity and the ecology of a particular space emerge (Philippopoulos-Mihalopoulos 2013: 37; 2016: 252). Importantly, the attributes of this surface retain socio-legal currency; that is, participants can navigate the sensorial and affective charge of the environment in legally meaningful ways (Shaw 2024: 106-7). In *Bodylex*, meaning(s) arose from a microcosmic experience of a normative space, where the dancers’ behaviours, including acutely emotional responses, carried probative weight.

Emotion in these circumstances has artefactual currency. Using a physical language to navigate the law’s material form will necessarily produce a suite of artefacts, including emotions. In *Bodylex*, the conflict between the dancing body and an abstract representation of the law’s materiality (i.e. the plank) engendered emotional responses in the dancers which shaped their perception of the system they occupied and the choices made within it. Importantly, these emotions were plural (see Dancer 1’s alternative perspectives above), enabling the dancers to construct and interrogate multiple ways of being within a single system. It follows that such an exercise has the potential to transform, consciously or not, participants’ understanding of their own normative behaviours in *supra-subject* contexts beyond the theatre.

B Transliteration of Legal Doctrines

The second creative method used in *Bodylex* involved transliterating legal doctrines into movement scores. Focusing the inquiry on *inter-subject* dynamics within the law, I chose equity's concept of a fiduciary duty. At its simplest, this is a duty of loyalty and trust which proscribes conflict or profit against another, typically someone who occupies a position of special dependency or vulnerability (*Bristol & West Building Society v Mothewe* [1998], *Breen v Williams* (1996)). Taking these basic elements, I created the following improvisation score:

- (a) one person closes their eyes to become vulnerable (the principal);
- (b) the other two dancers (the fiduciaries) provide touch cues to the principal to provoke movement, while always ensuring the principal's physical safety; and
- (c) all three dancers have the choice to play with the idea of profit and conflict.

To avoid profiting or conflicting with the physical cue means yielding to it (i.e. submitting to the physical touch, reducing muscle tone, inviting limpness, etc.), and to actively profit or conflict from the cue means resisting (i.e. blocking or bracing, pushing back, increasing muscularity, etc.).

The improvisation score initially functioned as an investigative tool in the studio by enabling the dancers and me to ascribe corporeal value to the equitable concept. By experimenting with the physical expression of the score (varying tone, rhythm, pace, spatiality, etc.), we collectively forged an embodied rendering of the doctrine capable of reappropriation. With this enfolded motility, the score was then applied for both demonstrative and generative purposes: it was performed in the show, where the decision-making, bodily responses and physical tone manifested in real-time as a live exhibition of fiduciary principles; and it was also used to generate movement in the studio that was filmed then memorised by the dancers so it could be performed on stage as set material without the fiduciaries' manipulations.³

This creative process was designed to avoid purely demonstrative

outcomes: a choreography merely *performing* the crude power dynamics of a fiduciary relationship. Such an approach aligns with Ramshaw's proposition that the law itself is improvised (cf. performed), as both the law and improvisation must attend to singularity over generality, the immediate set against the pre-existing (Ramshaw 2016: 7, 16). By structuring the inquiry around this tension, the score retained its spontaneity, where outcomes were sometimes predictable but never certain. The dancers, like all subjects of the law, were engaged in a negotiation of roles and interests, enacting 'judgment' (i.e. making choreographic choices) within a broader collaborative and performative framework (Sawyer 2006: 3-4). Positioning the law as improvisation enables subjects to engage in a 'social practice' that facilitates alternative modes of being in society (Fischlin and Heble 2004: 13 cited in Ramshaw 2010: 151). Most importantly, navigating these *inter-subject* relations is an inherently creative exercise, enabling participants to challenge the normative assumptions (and potentialities) of legal doctrines.

Developing an improvisational tool that isolated the core elements of a fiduciary duty and amplified them (for example, by blindfolding the principal) also revealed potent emotional perspectives buried within the equitable doctrine. The choreographic score elicited tenderness and aggression, empathy and impulse, vulnerability and trust. Crucially, these behaviours can be characterised as different modes of articulating or *embodying* the broader maxims of equity that underpin a fiduciary duty: 'those who seek equity must do equity', 'those who come into equity must come with clean hands' and 'equity acts *in personam*' (which, at least historically, means equity operates upon the conscience of a person and does not punish) (Heydon et al 2015: 74, 80, 98-9). Arguably, it was only through an improvisational construct that the latent expressivity and emotionality of these maxims could be realised. That is, if we accept the proposition that justice, a necessary element of the law, is predicated on spontaneity in legal judgment (Ramshaw 2010: 145), it follows that an exploration of a doctrine itself rooted in justness must be undertaken via a methodology premised on equivalent principles of temporality and negotiability. In practice, this creative

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process enabled the dancers to embody fiduciary relations and their emotional affects in a way that preserved, if not augmented, equity's dogmatic concerns.

A creative process built on real-time negotiation of roles and interests, and rooted in ideas of justness and fidelity, allowed the participants to not just experience the normative dynamics of socio-legal relations between bodies, but interrogate them. Indeed, for Dancer 1, the choreographic exercise of playing the fiduciary went beyond demonstration. She reflected:

We were actually ... experiencing it ... there was no mime element. ... There's a certain intensity in performing that section that was a bit confronting, like I actually have this person's safety ... in my hands.

Here we see the improvisation score functioning as a method by which non-legally trained bodies can 'see' and 'feel' the fiduciary doctrine from within, despite lacking the relevant scholastic or vocational knowledge. Through independent creative judgment, each dancer could access, embody and apply their own understanding of the law in a continuous, iterative process; testing and adjusting those choices and behaviours based on a myriad of instantaneous corporeal artefacts. This real-time interrogation ultimately shaped and re-shaped the dancers' normative experience of the legal framework surrounding a particular type of *inter-subject* exchange. Put another way: Dancer 1, for example, having never heard of the concept of a fiduciary duty before *Bodylex*, has now embodied and applied the doctrine in a way so etched in her physical memory that her future encounters with others will be imbued with that knowledge. This experiential engagement of bodies has the potential to shape one's understanding of the law more acutely than any orthodox study of doctrine.

C Abstract Application of Legal Texts

The third creative process was the abstract application of legal texts, which naturally fell to the most specific and granular level of inquiry: the legal regulation of a single body (*intra-subject*). One such document was the training manual for Australian Border Force (ABF) – the federal agency responsible for immigration, customs and border

security, and which has a recent history of controversially boarding and towing back boats bound for Australia carrying asylum seekers as part of its 'Operation Sovereign Borders' (Kaldor Centre for International Refugee Law 2018). Through text and images, the manual depicts the offensive and defensive tactics to be used by officers when disarming or disabling threats. It reveals physical (and necessarily violent) state-sanctioned protocol to be used against legal aliens; the prism through which a foreigner might first 'touch' Australia.

In particular, the manual reveals nine strike points intended to temporarily stupefy the target through the infliction of pain – the brachial plexus, clavicle notch, jugular, scapular, radial nerve, ulna nerve, femoral nerve, common peroneal nerve and tibial nerve motor point (Australian Border Force 2017). In a radical repurposing of the textual instructions, these nine areas were selected as the *only* available contact points between the fiduciaries and principal in the improvisation score described above. Juxtaposing an intentionally violent protocol against a doctrine rooted in harm minimisation highlights the particularities of when and how the law permits (or prescribes) certain modes of contact between bodies.

By restricting contact to these nine areas, the dancers could explore physical interactions that were lawful yet, without being an ABF officer or previously subject to their tactics, entirely unfamiliar. As someone 'without' the law or any prior knowledge of the manual, Dancer 1 recalled the foreign sensation of applying the strike points, noting that 'there was something just so wrong' about it. Dancer 2, equally unfamiliar with the subject matter, made sense of the movement through an empathic lens:

To physicalise [the ABF] imagery and to look at [it] written down and given as instructions of how to treat someone ... and [to think] these are people, this could be me, this could be someone I know ... having that made [it] quite personal compared to something that feels like an official thing like the law which "isn't meant for me" – that's probably what I took away from the process.

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These reflections illustrate how an abstract and embodied application of the training manual engendered new perspectives on the law and its apparatuses (see, for example, Calder and Cowan 2008). As Mulcahy notes, such dance-based methods ‘can allow the researcher as practitioner to *see and feel* new possibilities for the law’ (Mulcahy 2021: 122, emphasis added). That is, legal concepts, when mapped against or activated by a body, can produce sensorial artefacts from which the individual can derive new meaning(s).

A second, more orthodox application of legal texts in *Bodylex*’s creative process involved a stocktake of legislation and case law that regulate or relate specifically to body parts or their movement (again, an *intra-subject* inquiry). In the show’s third act, a voiceover recites verbatim these statutory and common law authorities, while the dancers create tableaux depicting a cabled microphone pointing at the relevant body part.⁴ We hear regulation 34 of the *Occupational Health and Safety Regulations* 2017 (Vic) which determines safe sound levels for the ear; the common law test from *Harkess v Woodhead* [1950] as to when a noxious odour may amount to the tort of nuisance; section 7AA of the *Sex Discrimination Act* 1984 (Cth) which protects the right to breastfeed in public or a workplace; the common law’s recognition in *Coco v The Queen* (1994) that a foot may be used to trespass; and so on.

Although simple in structure, the survey quickly reveals the extensive regulation of our bodies, sharpened as the voiceover accelerates and the laws begin to cacophonously overlap. The scene’s novelty arises from the concomitancy of the law’s textual and aesthetic formulations. The human body is presented as the site to which written laws – at some point cleaved from the flesh and fossilised into language – may be stitched back to their origin. This (re-)embodiment makes the law immediately legible, especially for those participants ‘without’ the law.

I asked the dancers about their role in this inquiry and how they related to their body as the site of this research. After claiming she was ‘not smart enough to understand law [because of] the language that is around [it]’, Dancer 2’s answer settled on the physical:

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For me, it was about creating analogies or metaphors for myself, which then felt more like I could show that for other people through my body ... Being able to almost translate the ideas we were discussing into my body and then feel like the body, which is such a – I think – very relatable thing to see on stage because we all have a body, we all feel the same emotions and to then share that with other people, even though they might've all taken away different interpretations, something about being able to transmit that felt like ... I was a vessel for that process.

By shifting the inquiry away from the materiality of legal text and exploring its abstract potential, new perspectives and ways of understanding the law may transpire. As the dancers' reflections imply, such an approach can also have a democratising effect by removing perceived technical barriers to comprehending the law and enabling alternative means of access through movement.

5 Conclusion

The creative processes discussed in this paper are sequenced according to their scale of inquiry; a functional methodology that also tracks the thematic arc of *Bodylex* as a stage work. The show opens in a state of socio-legal abstraction marked by ambiguity and poetic potential, before gradually narrowing to a very specific and personal study of a body under regulation. In doing so, both performer and spectator become increasingly implicated in the inquiry. Intentionally positioning the body as the investigative medium is a hallmark of performance-led research, where action-based creativity and process take precedence over definitive or theoretical outcomes. This is especially true for dance, which fundamentally relies on the body as its expressive vessel.

What then might *Bodylex*, as a performance-led inquiry, reveal about the law/dance relationship? The project is premised on the principle that choreography can serve as an interlocutor between the law and the body. As law manifests as an embodied practice, there is a natural logic to studying it using the language of movement, intentionally organised and prescribed through choreographic tools. Such application may be demonstrative, transliteral, abstract or improvised: each a calculated

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but necessarily experimental attempt to excavate latent jurisprudential perspectives lying in deep reserve. Inquiries should resist the law's partiality to specificity and protocol, and instead embrace the many and fleshy potentialities of the law articulable through the dancing body. The resulting artefacts – a plurality of movements, gestures, sensations and affects – may then be instrumentalised to interrogate the law's normativity. This is ultimately a transformative process for all participants, irrespective of legal training, that encodes and integrates new knowledges. It follows that the case to be made for law/dance interdisciplinarity is compelling, best exploited by the tool of choreography and those of us willing to take up the dance.

Endnotes

- 1 I presented a version of this paper at the Socio-Legal Studies Association Annual Conference 2025 at the University of Liverpool and wish to acknowledge the feedback of those present, together with the feedback of the anonymous reviewers on an earlier draft of this paper.
- 2 Video excerpt available at <<https://vimeo.com/1083242935/02a03c0103>>.
- 3 Video excerpt, which includes comparative footage from both the studio and the stage, available at <<https://vimeo.com/1083243333/93fd7e0ac2>>.
- 4 Video excerpt available at <<https://vimeo.com/1083243446/80bf81b101>>.

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