

Training in  
Germaine Acogny  
Technique  
2022 | 2023



**ÉCOLE DES SABLES**  
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  
THE **EEG-COWLES FOUNDATION**

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    eeg-cowles Foundation

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    Romain Panassié

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    Sherry Sable

    Patrick Acogny

    Lila Greene

    Omilade Davis-Smith

The Ecole des Sables

## 1 • PRESENTATION

The Ecole des Sables & the eeg-cowles Foundation have come together to propose a program **Training in Germaine Acogny Technique** as a basic tool for the teaching of modern African dance.

This training will take place at the Ecole des Sables in Toubab Dialaw, Senegal, and will bring between 20 and 30 young dancers from around the world for **2 x 12 weeks in 2022 and 2023**. The training provides a complete program to learn to teach dance to children and adults. This program will be taught in both English and French.

The program responds to an urgent professional and economic need. In Africa, dance is still rarely recognized

as a full-fledged professional discipline despite a growing demand for classes with qualified teachers. State of the art teaching dance today includes knowledge of somatic approaches and movement analysis, included in this program. Upon successful completion of both sessions, candidates will receive a diploma.



## 2 • BACKGROUND

In the different countries of Africa, dance accompanies all rites of passage: births, baptisms, circumcisions, weddings, funerals... Dance is a means for transmitting traditions, the history of regions and peoples. The traditional dances of Africa are an essential part of its non-material cultural heritage, they are the living expression of beliefs and carry the memory of the evolution of its cultures.

Today, dance also responds to a new demand coming from modern civil society.

The dances of West Africa have gained international visibility through social media, television and musicals. They are now performed as an art form that occurs both in villages and in the city as well as on national and international stages. In addition, the dances are taught on all continents of the world in both studio and university courses. And yet, the transmission of dances in an institution is rare in West Africa itself.

Also, in West Africa as elsewhere in the world, dance is not reserved just for professionals on stage. Dance classes are happening in all areas of life, practised by amateurs for well-being, in schools for cognitive enhancement or in the social sector such as prisons, refugee camps, hospitals, and special needs areas, to give only a few examples. There is also a growing offer of dance workshops for adult amateurs who come to Africa from Europe, America or Asia. Faced with these demands, there is a shortage of qualified teachers. Whether by vocation, professional choice or economic necessity, many African dancers move towards teaching without having undergone any training themselves. Offering a program in the Germaine Acogny Technique, including somatic approaches to movement and the history of African dances, will make it possible to fill the almost total gap in training in dance pedagogy in West Africa. It will offer to all future teachers of the Germaine Acogny Technique the skills they need to guarantee the quality of their classes.

### 3 • GENERAL CONTENT & OBJECTIVES

The objective of this training is to train dance teachers in the Germaine Acogny Technique. This technique is the only one on the continent based on principles of traditional African dances adapted to a modern context. This training will bring to the teachers an analytical knowledge of the body in motion, the pedagogy of dance and the history of dances in the world and in Africa in particular in order to prepare them as professional, qualified teachers.

#### THE TRAINING OFFERS

- training in the Germaine Acogny Technique;
- improving the quality of dance education in West Africa and elsewhere;
- acquiring skills acquired through a certification program;
- developing a remunerative professional activity: the teaching of dance;
- inquiring into an in-depth knowledge of oneself, of one's body, of one's own dance;
- recognizing the importance of African dances, both traditional and creative, through quality transmission.

This training has a very concrete goal : to bring to the dancers the knowledge necessary to be good teachers. This will be done by studying the practical and theoretical aspects needed to evaluate and encourage the progress of their students' needs and potentials and will enable the dance teachers to work with groups, to use collective intelligence and to organize classes in any context or time- frame for any age group.

#### THE GERMAINE ACOGNY TECHNIQUE

Germaine Acogny defines her very specific technique by these words: African dance in a modern expression. Her technique relies mainly on the work of the spine and most of the movements are based on these three elements: ripple, contraction, vibration/ tremulations. Many of these movements are inspired by nature – plants or animals – but also by daily life in Africa. It uses symbolic images from nature, such as the Fromager tree, the eagle, the rain, the water lily, the guinea hen... The movements are precise, clearly defined and are deeply linked to breathing. The result is a very pure, powerful and elegant expression.

Germaine Acogny also works with improvisation. The training encourages African dancers to discover their own path by transforming their traditional dances into a modern expression and form. The work of Germaine Acogny helps dancers to see their own gestures from a different angle, to analyze and use them with a new creativity.

Her technique is strongly linked to Africa while at the same time belonging to the universal. In the world of Western dance, she suggests practicing African dance for its richness, power and strength, and experiencing it as a new source of

inspiration. The Germaine Acogny Technique offers finding the *body lost* by feeling earth, rhythm, heartbeat, and discovering a new flow of physical energy.



## 4 • SOMATIC APPROACHES

Somatic approaches applied to dance promote the understanding and integration of danced movements. Based on current research in functional anatomy, physiology, neurobiology, and more, somatics is a field that continues to spread and deepen.

Sylvie Fortin, one of the teachers in this training program, professor at the University of Quebec in Montreal, highlights three aspects of somatic education directly related to the work of dancers, teachers or choreographers:



### 4.1 IMPROVING TECHNIQUE

With a better knowledge of one's body through its different systems (skeletal, muscles, nerves, organs...), and their functioning, the dancer learns to feel movements in depth and thus will teach them more easily, convincingly. The dancer learns to work *with* his or her body and not *against* it; he or she will be led to feel very different movements through targeted images and exercises.

### 4.2 INJURY PREVENTION

Dancers, teachers and choreographers can prevent injuries by learning the fundamentals of alignment and physical development, especially in children. Furthermore, children do not have the same coordination skills as adults ; some exercises may be useless or dangerous depending on their age. Even in adults, the dancer, teacher and choreographer must know what kind of misaligned movement can endanger the body. Bad habits can create a ground for potential injury. However, some injuries can also be improved with somatic observation skills. A skilled teacher can guide his or her body or the student's towards reinforcing weaker areas in the body.



### 4.3 DEVELOPMENT OF EXPRESSIVITY

By practising a somatic approach, the dancer, the teacher and the choreographer develop an in-depth knowledge of the body. Thus, the artistic choices become more numerous as one can call upon this or that physical system to emphasize different types of movements, to refine the quality of the expression or the emotion sought, to accelerate or slow down time and occupy space with an intelligent body. The dancer is no longer in demonstration or imitation mode but in the feeling of movement. Dancers can also more quickly understand what is being asked of them by teachers or

choreographers with very different styles.

Among the most well-known somatic approaches applied to dance movement are Alexander, Feldenkrais, Body Mind Centering, Laban- Bartenieff, Continuum and Functional Analysis of the Body in Dance Movement (AFCMD). All of these approaches offer movement analyses where the sensory, cognitive, motor and emotional domains can come into play to better understand, feel and execute a danced movement.

Somatic approaches are about sensorial perception. Approaching movement through somatics leads to a questioning of one's habits ; it allows new perceptions of self and self with others. The dancer can build and enrichen his dance with sensorial experience. Thus, on a personal level, the dancer can become more centered and more available to exchange, to create a world in motion, listening to self and others.

**Three somatic approaches are part of this training: AFCMD, Feldenkrais and Continuum.**

## AFCMD

Functional Analysis of the Body in Danced Movement (AFCMD) makes it possible to observe, explore and analyze all dance styles, in their context and environment. The dancers will learn the basic notions of anatomy applied to dance, knowledge essential for dancing without injuries or trauma, for a deeper level of expression.

## FELDENKRAIS

The Feldenkrais method, named after its inventor Moshe Feldenkrais, aims to increase our possibilities of action. To achieve this, it gives particular importance to kinesthetic sensation, the sensory aspect of our own body organization. The method proposes to work by seeking ease of movement. Slow movements, relatively simple and often unusual, result in increasing movement efficiency. The Feldenkrais method is recognized for its beneficial effects on health and its contribution to artistic potential.

The Feldenkrais method is practiced in groups or in individual sessions. In group sessions, the teacher offers verbal sequences of movements. He or she guides students through the discovery of effective options for moving. Individually, the teacher adds touch to help the student discover how the whole body participates in each movement.

## CONTINUUM

Continuum is a sensory exploration based on the movement of the fluids that compose us, the approximately 70% of water present in our bodies, fundamental to life. The practice uses sounded breath to slow breathing and stimulate the fluids to vibrate ; this increases inner awareness. The sensations of one's inner self emerge through micro-movements, pulsations, ripples and spirals felt in the tissues. Continuum will be used in this program to prepare body and voice to work with texts to facilitate speaking in public.

## DANCE EDUCATION

The concept of pedagogical work in dance can be defined as the framework defining how students and teachers interact and how this interaction can be seen and analyzed collectively or individually. It suggests an activity that the teacher and students generate, organize and maintain while adapting learning to abilities.

The objectives of this training are to enable the teacher to develop his or her skills to:

- Construct a class by identifying the vocabulary necessary for communicating the objectives;
- Define the progress of a class: beginning, middle and end;
- Define the technical content;
- Choose the musical support;
- Identify the essential body consciousness needed to transmit a dance, to encourage the students' autonomy, to be able to listen to the group, to express the notion of space and time ...
- Adapt the class to its participants: children, adults, special needs, amateurs or professionals, and how to pace progress;
- Manage a very diverse group with different ages, skills and cultural references;
- Observe and correct by knowing one's own body as a model;
- Choose the right teaching mode for the progress of the group and its individuals: technical class or improvisation workshop ?



## 5 • FOR WHOM IS THE TRAINING?

This training program will take place in two 12-week sessions of the same 20-30 dancers, French or English speaking.

These sessions are for professionals with experience in teaching or a strong motivation to learn to teach. Candidates must have some professional experience and a minimum level of education (BAC or High School equivalent) guaranteeing a good comprehension of oral and written French or English. Candidates must show an ability to be fully committed to learning to teach the Germaine Acogny Technique including the capacity to apply this acquired skill afterwards.

Teaching experience is not required. Candidates may also be dancers who already teach but seek to improve or enrich their skills ; they may be those who would like to move towards the teaching of dance exclusively or as a complementary activity.

The candidates can come from different currents of dance: traditional, contemporary, jazz, urban, ... no particular aesthetic is a prerequisite.



## 6 • THE PROJECT LEADERS

### JANT-BI ASSOCIATION - ÉCOLE DES SABLES

Founded by Germaine Acogny and Helmut Vogt in 1998, the Ecole des Sables has trained more than 700 dancers from 27 African countries.

The International Center for Traditional and Contemporary Dances of Africa, Jant-Bi - École des Sables, is devoted to the professional training of African dancers and the development and promotion of contemporary African dance. It is a school of theoretical and practical teaching, a research laboratory and a place for meetings and exchanges, conferences and artistic residencies.

The association Jant-Bi also has a company of the same name which presents its choreographic creations all over the world.

### THE EEG-COWLES FOUNDATION

Founded in 2003 and directed by Lila Greene, the eeg-cowles Foundation is an American foundation whose aim is to promote research, training, inventiveness, creation and dissemination in the field of the arts; to contribute to increasing international understanding among peoples of diverse cultural heritages through artistic exchanges and to participate in access to artistic and economic independence for artists from all over the world.

Since 2010, the eeg-cowles Foundation has been supporting initiatives in West Africa and working alongside artists in the region.

## 7 • TEACHERS & CLASS CONTENT

### GERMAINE ACOGNY

A Senegalese - French dancer and choreographer, Germaine Acogny founded her first African dance studio in Dakar in 1968. Influenced by the gestural heritage of her grandmother, a Yoruba priestess, and her learning of traditional African dances and Western dances (classical, modern) in Paris and New York, Germaine Acogny developed her own technique of Modern African Dance.



Between 1977 and 1982, she directed Mudra Africa, created in Dakar by Maurice Béjart and the poet, writer, French statesman, first president of the Republic of Senegal, Léopold Sédar Senghor.

In 1980, she wrote her book *Danse africaine*, published in three languages. After the closure of Mudra Afrique, she moved to Brussels with the company of Maurice Béjart and organized international African dance courses that were very popular with the European public. This experience was renewed in Africa, in the village of Fanghoumé, in Casamance (southern Senegal) with participants from all over the world.

Germaine Acogny dances, choreographs and teaches internationally ; she is an emissary of African dance and culture. Her work and personality are immensely respected not only in Africa but everywhere in the world.

With her husband Helmut Vogt, in 1985 she founded in Toulouse the Studio School Ballet Theatre of the 3rd World. In 1995, she decided to return to Senegal and build an International Centre for Traditional and Contemporary Dances in Africa.

In 1997, she was appointed artistic director of the *Danse d'Afrique en Création* in Paris and of the *Rencontres Chorégraphiques de Danse Africaine Contemporaine*, a position

she held until September 2000. In 2004, Germaine Acogny inaugurated the *Ecole des Sables*, a place for professional dance education, including forums for meetings and exchanges with dancers from Africa and the rest of the world.

### HONOURS & AWARDS

- In 1999, Germaine Acogny was decorated as “Pioneer Woman” by the Senegalese Ministry of the Family and the National Solidarity. Germaine Acogny received the “Chevalier de l’Ordre du Mérite”, the “Officier des Arts et des Lettres” and the “Chevalier de l’Ordre de la Légion d’Honneur” distinctions from the French Republic. She is also honoured by the Senegalese Republic with the “Chevalier de l’Ordre National du Lion” and “Officier des Arts et des Lettres” distinctions.
- 2004: Germaine Acogny was given in 2004 a special recognition in form of a grant by the Foundation for Contemporary Performance Art, New York.
- In 2008, the African Magazine “Jeune Afrique” selected Germaine as part of the 100 personalities who “make” Africa.
- In 2009, she received the “Commandeur dans l’Ordre des Arts et Lettres” distinction from the French Republic.
- 2012 In 2012, she received the “Commandeur des Arts et Lettres” distinction from the Senegalese Republic.

- In 2016, the magazine of Africa selected Germaine as part of the 50 intellectuals of Africa. On March 25th, 2016, Germaine received the distinction of “Officier de la Légion d’Honneur” of the French Republic.
- In 2018 – International Elsa Wolliaaston Prize – Festival Danses et Continents Noirs. Germaine Acogny receives a New York BESSIE Award for outstanding performance in the solo “Mon élue noire-sacre # 2” and an Award for Lifetime achievements in the field of choreography, movement and dance from the Cairo International Festival for Experimental and Contemporary Theatre.
- In January 2019, Germaine Acogny received the ECOWAS (Economic Community of West African States) Excellence Award, category Arts and Letters.
- In 2020, Germaine Acogny was named the Ambassador of the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris for the 2020/2021 season.
- In February 2021, Germaine Acogny was Awarded with “The Golden Lion for Lifetime achievement” in dance by the La Biennale di Venezia.



## CONTENT

The Germaine Acogny Technique is comparable to western techniques of modern dance. It communicates the idea that the dances of Africa are an ongoing dialogue with the Cosmos. Germaine Acogny shares her universe of a joyful body with her technique based on the virtuosity of feeling. She is the first in Africa to have developed, since 1968, a contemporary African dance.

Her work focuses on the spine, which represents the serpent or the tree of life.

The important elements of this technique are: a strong anchorage in the ground, the movements of the torso and the movements of the spine (undulations, tremors, contractions).

Many of the movements are inspired by nature - plants or animals, but also by the elements of everyday life in Africa. They are precise and clearly defined and are deeply connected to breathing. The movements of the Germaine Acogny Technique are named on the basis of symbolic images extracted from nature such as the Fromager tree, the water lily, the deer. These exercises help to free the body, to feel it in new ways, to be well rooted in the ground, to better appreciate one’s verticality and to open up towards the sky. The movements also contribute to the enrichment of the dancer’s body vocabulary.

Germaine Acogny also works with improvisation. She trains dancers to discover their own path by transforming their traditional dances, heritage or family gestures into a contemporary expression and form.

Germaine Acogny’s courses are divided into three parts:

- Warm-up in a circle and/or using all available space;
- Standing barre;
- Barre on the ground;
- The combination of different movements, their transformation into a dance.

## MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

The dancers must listen to the percussionist to feel the rhythm and anticipate suspensions and calls to begin or change a movement. The musician is more than an accompanist; he or she helps to open the ear of the dancer, and inspires qualities of the unusual, thus contributing to a new body vocabulary.

## ALESANDRA SEUTIN



Alesandra Seutin is Ecole des Sables' newest Artistic Director. International performer, choreographer and teacher, AlesandraSeutin (daughter of a South African and Belgian couple) was born in Harare, Zimbabwe. She grew up in Brussels and now lives between London and Brussels. She has studied dance all over the world, in Europe, Africa, Asia and the United States. She has a degree in theatre-dance from Trinity Laban Conservatory and in choreography and performance from Middlesex University in London. She also trained at the École des Sables in Senegal, where she was a student of Germaine Acogny, who passed on her technique to her. Seutin is now an ambassador of this technique, which she teaches at the École des Sables and all over the world.

Since she founded her company Vocab Dance in 2017, Alesandra Seutin has gradually built an international reputation for her thought-provoking and visually striking creations, whether for small stages, large venues or even

outside the walls. Subjects that touch on and reflect social, political and economic issues stimulate her creativity. Through movement, voice and music, she creates strong visual works that trigger discussions. Her recent productions include: Giant, an immersive dance and installation duo and a new group choreography, Boy Breaking Glass, which premiered at Sadler's Wells, London in October 2018 and Dear Winnie, which has been touring the Netherlands and Belgium since 2019. Alesandra Seutin also supports young emerging dancers and choreographers and recently provided the dramaturgy and writing for the show À travers l'autre for the twins Doris and Nathalie Bokongo Nkumu, known as Les Mybalés. In 2020-21, she was the guest artistic director of the National Youth Dance Company (NYDC) at Sadler's Wells.

### CONTENT

Alesandra Seutin's class will be based on the transmission of the Germaine Acogny Technique, under the watch of Germaine Acogny.

## AÏDA COLMENERO DIAZ



Aïda Colmenero Diaz was trained in Madrid at the Centro de Nuevos Creadores (Cristina Rota Theatre School), at the Conservatoire de danse professionnelle Marienma, and at the École des Sables, with Germaine Acogny, where she obtained the specialization in Germaine Acogny Technique. Aïda Colmenero Diaz is the only Spanish artist to obtain this title. Aïda founded Lanla Acogny Dance Technique in 2012, a research and dissemination platform for the Germaine Acogny technique. Several projects were born from Lanla including The March, an intensive international course that brings together 45 dancers, physicists, actors and circus artists selected each year for two weeks to work intensively at the Ecole des Sables. Aïda has received awards twice from the Spanish Ministry of Culture and AECID (Spanish Agency for Cooperation and Development). She is deeply involved in the development of contemporary dance on the African continent.

For the past ten years, she has concentrated her research, creation and pedagogical activities between Europe and Africa. In Africa, with Africa in

Dance, a training program developed in nine African countries; and with her choreographic creations. She is often a teacher for workshops at the Ecole des Sables and was invited three times to the annual Fabrik Postdam Festival in Germany. In Spain, she created Cycle de danse africaine contemporaine. This dance cycle consisted of a monthly meeting in the cities of Madrid and Barcelona. In 2017, Aïda created Africa Moment, the 1st International Meeting of the Performing Arts of Contemporary Africa in Barcelona.

Specialized in the African body and the African diaspora, she collaborated in the writing of *Nhaka Bhuku*, a body practice book from a decolonizing point of view, by performance artist Nora Chipaumire. This was possible thanks to a residency grant at the Matadero of Madrid Center. She was invited three times as a specialized trainer in the ACERCA program of the Spanish government to provide training in creative choreography in both Ecuador and Niger.

**CONTENT**

Aïda Colmenero Diaz's class will be based on a transmission of the Germaine Acogny Technique, under the watch of Germaine Acogny.

**ISE AN VERSTEGEN**



Performer, teacher and choreographer, Ise graduated from the Amsterdamse Hogeschool voor de Kunsten (Amsterdam Dance Academy/AHK) and graduated from the Ecole des Sables with a specialty in Germaine Acogny Technique.

From a very young age, she began training in academic dances (classical, jazz, contemporary and others); she trained in several academies before going to Amsterdam to continue.

In 2007 she started working with the company Don't Hit Mama (company based on African- American dances). It is thanks to Nita Liem and Bart Deus that she arrived at the Ecole des Sables in 2008.

Ise has been a teacher of the Germaine Acogny Technique since 2011, at the Ecole des Sables and the Dance Academy of Amsterdam/AHK ; she works nationally and internationally as an Acogny dance-practitioner.

She is co-founder of the organization LANLA (2012) and the project THE MARCH (2014-2017). In her choreographic work (for the uniYoon company

and independently) she intertwines her worlds of dance with a trans-cultural vision and language.

Ise is involved in social art and teaches dancers of all levels, ages and styles of dance. She has worked with Germaine Acogny (Jant-Bi), Patrick Acogny (Jant-Bi), Nita Liem (Don't Hit Mama), Jopie de Groot (AHK), Marijke Eliasberg and Jana Hicks (TNSP), Samantha Speis (Urban Bush Women) and James Carlès (Cie James Carlès).

**CONTENT**

Ise An Verstegn's classes will be based on a transmission of the Germaine Acogny Technique, under the watch of Germaine Acogny. She will also teach a classical dance course adapted to the Germaine Acogny Technique.

## RICHARD ADOSSOU



Choreographer at the National Ballet of Benin, I graduated from the Ecole des Sables in Germaine Acogny Technique. Initiated very early to walk on stilts and dance traditional Beninese dances, I joined the National Ballet of Benin in the year 2000.

I took various professional training courses at the Ecole des Sables from 2005 to 2013. During my first professional training in 2005, I was selected by Jean-Claude Gallotta and Moïse Touré for the piece Africa 2147 ; in 2006 began three years of European and African tours. In 2018, I participated again for the second version 2147, if Africa disappeared?

I have continued my training with Francesca Pedulla and Frey Faust by studying the notions of Axis Syllabus (biomechanics: analysis of the body in motion).

In the year 2012, I benefited from the agreement between Jant-Bi and the Centre National de Danse de Pantin for the training Métier culture, in France. I was awarded the Visa for Creation residency there in 2013.

Gold medalist at the 5th Games of La Francophonie in 2005, I represented Benin at the 6th and 7th Games as well. Author of several choreographic pieces, I am inspired by notions of Axis Syllabus, the Germaine Acogny Technique and the principles that govern traditional dances.

In 2007, I created the Rich'Culture Association, which deals with dance in all its forms: Initiation, Training, Research and Creation. Since 2010, I have been organizing in Benin the meeting of the International March towards MAIDA Dance.

I have met and worked with choreographers and teachers: Pierre Doussaint, Régine Chopinot, Germaine Acogny, Elisabeth Cameron Delman, Vincent Harisdo, Elisabeth Disdier, Susanne Buirge, Sophiatou Kossoko, Neta Pulvermacher, Patrick Acogny, Gabriel Smeet, Noortje Bijvoet, Feri De Gues, Salia Sanou, to name but a few.

### CONTENT

Richard Adossou's class will be based on the transmission of the Germaine Acogny Technique, under the watch of Germaine Acogny.

## MAMADOU BALDÉ



Mamadou Baldé is Senegalese, a dancer since 1997. He started in small groups in Saint Louis, Senegal.

After participating in several dance competitions, in 2006 Baldé decided to do dance workshops at the Ecole des Sables in Toubab Dialaw, directed by Germaine Acogny, where he spent 3 months. In 2007 he returned as a professional dancer to the Ecole des Sables. In 2008, he joined the Compagnie Jant-Bi and worked under the direction of several internationally renowned choreographers: Robyn Orlin, Jessica Sandoval, Gerardo Trejoluna,... With the troupe, he participated in tours in Europe, the United States, and elsewhere...

In parallel, at the Sobo Badé Space in Toubab Dialaw, several choreographers came from Europe and other parts of the world with their students for many years to work with Baldé.

### CONTENT

Mamadou Baldé's course will be teaching Sabar, a traditional Senegalese dance.

## SALIA SANOU



Salia Sanou is initiated in Bobo rites and traditions from Burkina Faso; he trained in African dance with Drissa Sanon, Koulédrafrou Alasane Congo, Irène Tassemedo and Germaine Acogny. He worked with Mathilde Monnier at the Centre Chorégraphique National de Montpellier, France for many years. With Seydou Boro, also from Burkina Faso, they founded the company Salia ni Seydou ; their first work was entitled *Le siècle des fous*. They were winners of the second Rencontres Chorégraphique de l’Afrique et de l’Océan Indien in Luanda. Salia Sanou was the Artistic director of Rencontres Chorégraphiques de l’Afrique et de l’Océan Indien between 2001 and 2006. In 2006, Salia Sanou and Seydou Boro founded and directed together the Centre de Développement Chorégraphique La Termitière de Ouagadougou in Burkina Faso. In 2007, they received the Trophée Cultures France des Créateurs sans frontières, which distinguishes creations and international artistic cooperative actions.

In 2008, Salia Sanou was appointed Officer of Arts and Letters by the French Ministry of Culture, for his worldwide choreographic career. In 2010, he founded the Compagnie Mouvements Perpétuels. Salia Sanou cultivates the art of movement in a momentum and dynamic that allows spectators to better understand the state of the world through his choreographies.

In 2016, he created *Du désir d’horizons* at the Théâtre National de Chaillot (Paris, France), based on the material that he collected teaching dance in refugee camps in Africa.

In 2018, the first part of the tryptique *Multiples* was created, where the complete version includes Germaine Acogny, Nancy Huston, Babx and himself.

### CONTENT

Salia Sanou’s course will be based on the transmission of dance in civil society and in particular in refugee camps.

## AHMED TAÏGUÉ



Ahmed Taïgué was born in Chad and grew up there. From the age of 13 he trained in traditional dance with one of the choreographers of the Chadian National Ballet, and in 2002 Ahmed Taïgué joined the Compagnie des Jeunes Tréteaux directed by the Chadian choreographer Hyacinthe Abdoulaye Tobio.

In 2005, Ahmed Taïgué founded the company Ndam Se Na in N’Djamena, Chad, which organizes the continuous dance training and encourages the creation and diffusion of dance pieces. Ndam Se Na has started many workshops in different refugee camps in Chad. In the framework of these workshops, the company has developed educational work based on various social issues (hygiene, gender, diseases, etc.), a work of corpo-therapeutic reconstruction.

In 2003 Ahmed Taïgué discovered contemporary dance during workshops in N’Djamena with Julie Dossavi (a French choreographer of Beninese origin).

He studied at the Ecole des Sables in Senegal and at the Centre National de la Danse de Pantin in France, before becoming himself a trainer of young dancers in N’Djamena.

After filming in France in Julie Dossavi’s choreographed piece *Être dans la peau d’une femme*, Ahmed Taïgué presented his own solo *Crache mon histoire* in Paris in December 2009, in which he tells how dance allows war victims to regain their

self-esteem. Enlisted by force at the age of 22 by the Chadian army, Ahmed Taigue knew the war and made it the heart of his work as a dancer.

Definitely a committed artist, he wants to share his experience with Central African and Sudanese refugees in the Amboko, Gondjé and Dosseye camps in the south of the country. In 2006, Taigue, with the help of the UNHCR, managed dance workshops in the camps near Goré, Chad, where more than 300 refugees are registered.

## **CONTENT**

Ahmed Taigue's course will be based on the transmission of dance in civil society and in particular in refugee camps.

## **SYLVIE FORTIN**



Sylvie Fortin is a professor in the Department of Dance at the University of Quebec in Montreal, Canada ; she is also a Feldenkrais practitioner. Her fields of teaching and research include critical and socio-cultural approaches to the body, somatic education, dance transmission, health promotion, and dance accompaniment for women and children in vulnerable situations.

A renowned teacher, she has been invited to give workshops in China, France, Mexico, Colombia, Brazil and New Zealand where she received the Distinguished Visiting Scholar Award in 2010.

## **CONTENT**

Sylvie Fortin's class, focused on experimentation, will address the many facets of teaching dance in different contexts. Participants will learn to:

- Identify different contexts for teaching dance (professional, recreational, therapeutic, educational, cultural, etc.);
- Acquire knowledge of the motor, emotional and intellectual characteristics of all students and their possible learning difficulties;
- Take on all tasks related to the role of dance teacher (how to plan a

program, group management, the link between teaching/learning, evaluations, projects to promote dance according to the situation, etc.);

- Reflect on the artistic and pedagogical relationship between the communicator (teacher, choreographer, facilitator, etc.) and the audience (students, dancers, spectators, patients, etc.);
- Manage effective dance classroom strategies;
- Recognize strengths and weaknesses in teaching style;
- Apply knowledge in practical situations of movement in order to optimize the body organization of another person;
- Think critically about one's own practical training as a dancer and teacher.

This theory+practice course will be based on functional anatomy and somatic education so that participants develop a safe and optimal teaching practice regardless of the style of dance taught.

## EMMANUELLE LYON



Emmanuelle Lyon was trained in New York at the Balanchine School and then by Maggie Black. She danced with the Boston Ballet, the Bat-Dor Dance company in Israel, with Heinz Spoerli in Switzerland and Peter Goss in Paris.

Classical dance teacher and specialist in Functional Analysis of the Body in Dance Movement, she teaches regularly at the Centre National de la Danse in Pantin, France and for the dancers of the Ballet of the Paris Opera as part of training for the Certificat of Aptitude and the French state Diploma of Dance Teacher. She is also a lecturer at the University Paris 8, for the training of acrobats at the École Nationale des Arts du Cirque in Rosny-sous-bois and at the Centre National de Danse Contemporaine in Angers.

### CONTENT

Emmanuelle Lyon's class will be based on Functional Analysis of the Body in the Dance Movement – AFCMD - intended for dancers wishing to develop a practice and thought process for teaching dance related to their own initial training.

AFCMD works with sensorial experience and objective anatomical knowledge that governs movement (functional anatomy, bio mechanics, neurophysiology, data coming from human sciences...), to question the intention and initiation of gesture, postural dynamics and specific co-ordinations of dance, taking into account context and establishing an open dialogue with the imagination of the movement.

The objectives of this course are:

- To develop and integrate a fine perception of danced gesture. In each situation, questions about the prevention of injuries and the functionality and expressiveness of the gesture will be considered inseparably, whether it is a virtuosity of the intimate or the plus of a more daily gesture;
- To enrich the tools of observation vis-à-vis their dance practice and bring out new paths of research to think and work on the transmission of their dance ;
- To take into account the student's own experience and apply this in a detailed program of class content ;
- To respond to specific requests and general context, ....

## ROMAIN PANASSIÉ



Romain Panassié is a dancer, notator of movement (Benesh Choreologist), and specialist in AFCMD.

Trained at the CNSMDP (National Conservatory of Music and Dance in Paris) in contemporary dance and Benesh writing, he has danced for different choreographers (Maryse Delente, Marc Vincent, Jean Guizerix, Nathalie Adam...) and leads projects on transmission of repertory to various audiences. A member of the Artistic Council of the Carnets Bagouet, he is interested in the repertoire of the Trisha Brown company, as well as in older dances (Renaissance, Baroque) and traditional dances (Maître Guillaume Company).

In 2018, he published, in collaboration with Sophie Rousseau and Martine Truong Tan Trung, Temps, Rythme et Mouvement - tools for dance and music transmission (ed. Delatour). Currently, he dances in the company Fêtes Galantes (Béatrice Massin), teaches movement analysis (Universities Paris 8 and Lille 3, at the RIDC in Paris, the CNDC in Angers...), the Benesh system

(at the CNSMDP), and regularly gives classes and workshops in contemporary dance.

## CONTENT

Romain Panassié's class will continue to explore the use of AFCMD to refine the tools involved in the teaching of Germaine Acogny Technique.

## STEFAN FERRY



Stefan Ferry was born in Belfort, France. From 1991 to 1994 he trained at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique et de Danse de Paris (CNSMDP). Stefan danced with Les Ballets de Monte-Carlo under the direction of Jean-Christophe Maillot from 1994-1999, where he danced repertory by Maillot, George Balanchine, William Forsythe, Jiří Kylián, John Neumeier and others. In 1998 and 1999, he created two short dance works for l'Atelier des Ballets de Monte-Carlo.

Stefan joined the Batsheva Dance Company in Israel from 1999 to 2008, performing works by Ohad Naharin, Mats Ek, William Forsythe, Sharon Eyal, Barak Marshall, Ruth Ziv-Eyal, John Jasperse and others. From 2003 to 2008, he initiated the Batsheva Dancers Create and choreographed pieces for the program. In 2007-2008, Stefan was rehearsal director for Ohad Naharin's Furo. He received the Yair Shapira Award in 2005 (best dancer in Israel).

Stefan has been a Gaga teacher since 2008. He gives many workshops and teaches the repertoire of Ohad Naharin in many institutions all over the

world.

## CONTENT

Stefan Ferry will share Gaga which is a language and pedagogy of movement developed by the director and teacher of the Batsheva Dance Company, Ohad Naharin.

The movements are improvised on the basis of somatic experience and imagery described by the teacher, which provides a framework that promotes unconventional movement. The imagery is intended to guide the expressiveness of the artist's movements by focusing his attention on specific areas of the body. In his classes, Stefan will make the link with the Germaine Acogny Technique.

## SHERRY SABLE



Sherry Sable trained at the School of Performing Arts of the Philadelphia Dance Academy, where she worked in all aesthetics and dance styles: classical, contemporary, jazz, traditional dance from various countries, Duncan, Labanotation, Dalcroze, improvisation and composition according to Louis Horst, ... She then studied dance pedagogy at New York University, and French at Columbia. She trained at the Martha Graham School, but also with Dan Wagonner and Viola Farber. She worked, among others, with the companies of Pearl Lang and Lar Lubovich, before moving to Paris. She obtained her French Diploma as a Teacher of Contemporary Dance in 1991 and her diploma as a music trainer for dancers from the IFEDM of Paris in 1992. For more than 15 years she has been active in various projects including Danse à l'école in Sarcelles, Chartres, Poissy, Saint Quentin en Yvelines, Nanterre and Pantin. She is currently a teacher at the Centre National de la Danse in Pantin, France, specializing in children's dance education.

## CONTENT

Sherry Sable's class addresses the process of being able to analyse - in order to evaluate artistic and musical skills, specific to each culture, into elements for the transmission of dance for children.

What is dancing, what does it mean to dance ?

Will be addressed: the physical and cognitive development of children; verbs of action and daily gestures used in teaching the fundamentals of dance; musicality; space; accessories, objects as tools for understanding and acquiring skills; methods of transmission.

## PATRICK ACOGNY



Patrick Acogny first trained in Europe (especially in Belgium and France) before continuing his studies in Africa (Mali and Senegal). In 1995, he became choreographer and artistic director of a dance company in England and for 6 years remained at the head of one of the largest black companies in the country, Kokuma Dance Theatre. In 2002, he returned to France, taught in many dance schools and conducted workshops in France and abroad. In 2005, Patrick Acogny began teaching at the Ecole des Sables de Germaine Acogny and Helmut Vogt. He became Deputy Artistic Director of the École des Sables in 2007 and was appointed Artistic Director in 2014 until 2020.

Patrick Acogny holds two masters' degrees in Performing Arts: from Middlesex University in London (UK) and the University of Paris 8 (France). Patrick also obtained a Doctor of Arts, Science, Aesthetics and Technology: Performing Arts, Dance Option, from the University of Paris 8.

### CONTENT

The deconstruction of traditional dances or so-called heritage dances is a process of analysis and research used to revisit the forms, dynamics and context of dances. Through the use of choreographic tools for composition and improvisation, the dancer is invited to deconstruct the movement in order to make new ones and use these new forms for composition purposes.

As part of his intervention, Patrick Acogny's class will aim to equip the students with tools to explore movement from local dances. These tools can also be used with any dance technique. His approach aims to enrich the dancer's range of knowledge in order to help the students in all creative work.

The objectives are: understanding what makes a dance unique (rhythmic and gestural structure, fundamental movements of the dance and their variations) ; the ability to explore its forms and meanings while moving towards new forms, keeping the original bond and its trace even in the smallest gesture.

The student must also be familiar with the simple tools of gesture manipulation (compression/ extension), dynamics and relationship to body.

The collaboration with somatic approaches will allow the dancer to understand these notions of dynamics, placement and improve physical body knowledge in order to be more effective in performing gestures without the risk of injury.

## LILA GREENE



Lila Greene, born in the United States, trained in theatre and contemporary dance techniques in California and New York where she also participated as a performer and choreographer in various venues. She arrived in France in 1975 where she began teaching contemporary dance and improvisation in dance and theatre.

In Paris, she collaborated with many artists including Mark Tompkins and the Japanese choreographer Hideyuki Yano, for whom she was a privileged performer from 1976 to 1986. Lila Greene founded the company Sunsets in 1984 where she developed a transdisciplinary approach to teaching and performance.

Her research concerning the body and gesture led her to study French Sign Language. She also studied Movement Analysis with Odile Rouquet; together they created a collection of Dvds on somatic approaches applied to the artistic domaine ([rechercheenmouvement.org](http://rechercheenmouvement.org)) . While teaching in the theater department at the University of Montpellier, she studied and received a diploma in Chinese Language and Civilization, in 2001.

She is known for her interest in dance education, having conducted numerous dance and theatre courses for adults and children, for dancers and actors, both professional and amateur.

Since 2010, with the eeg-cowles Foundation, she has worked with dancers and institutions on promoting the professionalization of dance in West Africa.

In 2016 she became a practitioner at Continuum Wellsprings and since 2018 has been a member of the Continuum Teachers' Association.

### CONTENT

Lila Greene's class will work with Continuum and text to reinforce notions of presence and self-confidence so that the dancers will find ease in oral expression in front of others in a professional situation. The practice of Continuum will be used to prepare the body and voice to present texts from authors of the African continent and explore theatrical situations. Students will work on formulating and defending verbally their professional and pedagogical projects for the future.

## OMILADE DAVIS-SMITH



A multifaceted artist-scholar and business entrepreneur, Dr. Omilade Davis-Smith has worked the majority of her life as a dancer, educator, craftsperson and performer. Omi earned a PhD in Dance from Temple University with a specialization in the development of contemporary dance in Senegal, and an MFA in Dance from Arizona State University with a focus on contemporary African dance techniques and somatic approaches to choreography. Her scholarly research centers on the intersectionality of African and Diaspora dances, history, politics and aesthetics. Omi created the Awòdá theory, a new pan-African theoretical framework informed by indigenous African conceptualizations of embodiment, which positions dance as a lens through which culture is made visible. Awòdá explores relationships between the body, ideologies, aesthetics and culture through African and Diaspora embodied practice. In addition to her academic work, Omi is a 2021-2022 Fulbright Scholar award recipient. In collaboration with L'Institut Supérieur des Arts Mory Kante de Dubréka and Les Ballets Africains, Omi's Fulbright research centers on the continuities, evolution and political appropriation of dance in Guinea, West Africa.

Omi is the founder and artistic director of omi davis co, a dance-based organization with a network of artists based in the US and West Africa. The company helps to develop sustainable, ethical business networks in West Africa through two primary business activities. omi davis co promotes intercultural exchange through international travel and dance education, hosting an annual Dance in Africa workshop in Senegal each summer. The company is also a thriving manufacturer of all-natural handmade soap, hair and body care products that are derived from raw materials in Ghana, Nigeria and Senegal. The company's websites are [danceinafrica.com](http://danceinafrica.com) and [essentiallyomi.com](http://essentiallyomi.com).

**CONTENT**

Omilade Davis-Smith's class will be based on the transmission of the Germaine Acogny Technique.

## 8 • THE ÉCOLE DES SABLES

The Ecole des Sables is located on the heights of the fishing village of Toubab Dialaw, Senegal, 55km south of Dakar. It faces the ocean, a lagoon and savannah and extends over 4 and a half acres.

There are two large, open dance spaces, one of 400m<sup>2</sup> with a sand 'floor', called Kër Aloopho and the other of 280m<sup>2</sup> with a professional dance floor covering, called the Henriette Room.

The center is also equipped with the Jacqueline and Lucien Lemoine Conference Room that can be adapted to the needs of hosting seminars, conferences and dance rehearsal space.

The school has 24 bungalows with a total housing capacity of 72 people.

Meals are taken in the school's canteen which has capacity for 70 people. It is equipped with an indoor and outdoor kitchen meeting all hygiene standards and managed by the women of the village.

The school is equipped with a first aid station ; medical assistance is available for the duration of the training.



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