

**Please cite the Published Version**

Macdonald, Anna (2019) Acts of holding: dance, time and loss. Doctoral thesis (PhD), Manchester Metropolitan University.

**Downloaded from:** <https://e-space.mmu.ac.uk/622591/>

**Usage rights:**  Creative Commons: Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 4.0

**Enquiries:**

If you have questions about this document, contact [openresearch@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:openresearch@mmu.ac.uk). Please include the URL of the record in e-space. If you believe that your, or a third party's rights have been compromised through this document please see our Take Down policy (available from <https://www.mmu.ac.uk/library/using-the-library/policies-and-guidelines>)

**Acts of Holding:  
Dance, Time and Loss**

**Anna Macdonald**

# **Acts of Holding: Dance, Time and Loss**

**Anna Macdonald**

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
of the Manchester Metropolitan University for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy by Published Work (Route 1)

Department of Contemporary Arts

February 2019

## **Acts of Holding: Dance, Time and Loss**

### **Abstract**

*Acts of Holding* is a PhD by publication, which explores the relationship between dance, time and affect, focusing on the temporality of loss. It is a portfolio submission consisting of a body of choreographic practice, working within the field of western contemporary dance, that explores the capacity for dance to generate the temporal affect of loss for the viewer. The practice, made between 2010 and 2017, includes five screendance and one site-specific work and is submitted alongside five articles that articulate and respond to the practice-based findings. Collectively the publications generate insight into the role that loss plays in the temporal affect of dance, and what dance reveals about the temporality of loss.

By 'temporality of loss' the research refers to the experience or anticipation of the death of another in terms of its effect on the phenomenological sense of lived-time in the one who remains. Drawing on the author's embodied personal experience of bereavement, the research operates in reflective loops that shift between insider and outsider positions, in ways that resonate with an ethnographic model of the participant observer. These iterative cycles of making and reflection incorporate and impact psychoanalytic, philosophical and somatic discourse, concerning dance, time and loss. From this multi-modal research, responsivity, holding and precarity emerge as three key temporal qualities intrinsic to both dance and grief. These findings add to discursive and choreographic research, into the relationship between the body, affect and time, within screendance and dance studies from writers such as Phelan (1997, 2004), Lepecki (2012), Rosenberg (2012), and Bench (2016).

**Keywords:** *dance; screendance; transience; precarity; loss; responsivity*