

AMSTERDAM MASTER OF CHOREOGRAPHY (AMCh)¹

Artists who have established a professional practice and seek possibilities for further reflection and development can increase their research skills at the Amsterdam Master of Choreography. This two-year non-residential Master's program of the Amsterdam School of the Arts aims to contribute to the field of critical and contemporary dance research and creation. The individual artistic practice is the point of departure and will be the guiding thread of the course design.

Description and Admission Guidelines

OVERALL CONDITIONS OF STUDY

A two-year full time study course for dance artists who are interested in augmenting their existing professional practice through immersion in a rigorous Master level arts research program. The program provides the support structure and organization to facilitate choreographic and interdisciplinary practice-led research; with an emphasis on the processes of personal practice and the exploration and facilitation of research vectors unavailable to the candidate/artists in their current contexts. Therefore, the individual's artistic practice and research is the point of departure of the program and will be the guiding thread of the course content design.

The program accepts three to four student/artists each year resulting in a full contingent of no more than six to eight students at one time. This curriculum structure includes one six-week **individual residency** in Amsterdam to be undertaken in the first year; six two-week **intensive group seminars** (three-per-year); continuous **mentoring** by both internal (from the Core Staff listed below) and external practitioners; **public platforms** for presentation of both research and artwork.

One of the criteria for participation in the program is an existing professional practice (at least three years), through which the candidate demonstrates his or her capacity to maintain the necessary support structures for their art practice, and to examine and reflect on its embeddedness; the multiple connections and relations that are part of the conditions of making. Students are expected to maintain clear lines from and with these existing conditions. Therefore, while attendance and participation in the scheduled residency, all seminars, meetings and platforms is mandatory, full-time residency in Amsterdam is NOT a requirement.

INDIVIDUAL RESIDENCY

The program is able to provide a variety of resources (including dedicated studio space in Amsterdam and a limited budget) for this sustained six-week encounter with the student's making practice. The residency will be designed by the individual student with the support of the Core Staff and may involve collaborators (e.g. performers, dramaturges, designers, etc.). A draft design of the residency will already be a part of the second round of the selection process in order that AMCh program resources can be made explicit in connection to the student's proposed research plans.

INTENSIVE GROUP SEMINARS

The two-week seminars (three-per-year) are intended as intensive events during which each student will present their research questions, methods and processes for peer review and feedback. Students and Core Staff will work together to prepare a reader for each Seminar; and this and various writing components of the program (as constituted in the Dossier) will be collectively discussed.

The **first seminar**, organized at the start of the academic year, is intended as an orientation comprising two to three opportunities for each student to introduce their background, research plans and making practice. The Core Staff will lead various sessions on topics such as research documentation, meta-practices, interdisciplinarity and arts research issues and debates.

The **second seminar**, organized mid-year, will include a public interdisciplinary symposium. Speakers and topics will be determined in part by the various research vectors of the students; and they may be from any discipline, domain of information, area of expertise or knowledge.

The **third seminar**, at the end of the academic year, will serve as the context for a research progress report from all first year students and the final research presentation for those finishing the program. Final presentations will take place in a public venue, engage a selected wider audience and give evidence (through documentation, demonstration, lecture, performance and other means) of the quality, reflexivity, rigor, relationality and integrity of the two-year arts research process.

MENTORING

A critical component of the program, mentoring supports the large independent study component and is provided by both Core Staff, as internal mentors, and external mentors with qualifications in the specific research vectors of the students. Responsive to a range of dynamics and relationships, mentoring augments written course materials and guidelines; integrates the results of ongoing quality assurance measures and enhances the contents of the study course.

Internal mentoring provides the necessary continuity of engagement between the student and the course structure; and site visits (outside of Amsterdam) are possible. **External** mentoring, an important aspect of the program, is undertaken as a commission from the student for advice and feedback on the research process and progress; and to provide critical and professional input and reference points. As early as the first round of the selection process, the student is encouraged to propose external mentors who can best complement their research objectives, and Core Staff and the internal mentor will help to facilitate the eventual commission(s).

PUBLIC PLATFORMS

In addition to the final research presentation during the third seminar in the second year, it is the aim of the program to facilitate a single public presentation of the students' performance work in local professional contexts. Negotiations are currently underway with Netherlands based performance platform/venues including Springdance, Utrecht and Frascati/Gasthuis, Amsterdam.

DOSSIER/ DOCUMENTATION/ DISSEMINATION

The **Dossier** is a cumulative project that supports and explores writing across a range of registers including: enhancing communication, expanding observation and critical faculties and expository and creative writing based on reference research and extant literature. Questions arising from the relationship between writing, reading practices and research materials will be explored throughout the course.

Documentation refers to the specific methods and approaches used to trace something of the contours (physiological, phenomenological, psychic, nomadic, intellectual, emotional, etc.) of the practice-led research. What questions does one circle around and return to through this process? What means and modes of reflection are made possible through documentation and how can its **dissemination** further the public's engagement with the research?

Although AMCh is a practice-led research program and as such takes the position that it does not focus primarily on theoretical practices per se (as would an academic Dance Studies degree course); the ability to communicate aspects of the process of personal practice through writing and various forms documentation will be a prerequisite for satisfying the terms of the study.

INTERVIEW PROCESS TO ASSESSMENT CRITERIA

The **Second Round Selection: Interview** process is designed to establish and evaluate the synergy between the AMCh's educational goals and the artist's motivation to participate in the program, including a draft design of the individual residency and discussion of external mentors. The interview process will involve preparing a response to questions prepared by the First Round Selection committee; and will be guided by six, self-reflective qualifying criteria in which the candidate will be asked to reflect on their past professional experience, current special interests and career goals (see Admission Guidelines below for more details).

This process will lay the ground for the generation of appropriate individualised **assessment criteria** for the candidate/ artist. Upon selection, these will be further contextualized in and around the research plan, aims and objectives and the emerging documented results of the research process of the individual student.

CORE STAFF

The Core Staff are available for questions related to this program. Please use the email addresses at the end of the biographies below to contact them.

Scott deLahunta works from his base in Amsterdam as a researcher, writer, consultant and organiser on a wide range of international projects bringing performing arts into conjunction with other disciplines and practices. He is an Associate Research Fellow at Dartington College of Arts; Research Fellow with the Art Theory and Research and Art Practice and Development Research Group, Amsterdam School for the Arts. He serves on the editorial boards of Performance Research, Dance Theatre Journal and the International Journal of Performance and Digital Media. E-Mail: sdela@ahk.nl

Sher Doruff, formerly Head of the Research Program at Waag Society, is currently a Research Fellow with the ARTI Lectoraat of the Amsterdam School of the Arts. She received her PhD from University of the Arts London/Central Saint Martins College of Art and Design in 2006. Her research investigates the role of collaborative interplay and creative processes in performance practice, evolving the concepts in her dissertation: "The Translocal Event and the Polyrhythmic Diagram." She has published numerous papers, edited a book on Live Art, regularly lectures and presents in academic and artistic contexts and nurtures a modest artistic practice. E-Mail: sdoruff@xs4all.nl

Jeroen Fabius (AMCh Director of Program) was head of department of the School for New Dance Development in association with Robert Steijn from 2000-2002, and has been teaching Dance History and Anthropology since 1991. He is currently Research Fellow with the Art Theory and Research and Art Practice and Development Research Group, Amsterdam School for the Arts and is doing his PhD with the University of Utrecht (working title: "Materially politically body .The role of proprioception and kinesthetics in political subjectivity"). He has been a member of the Dance committee for the Fonds voor Amateur en Podiumkunsten since 2004. E-Mail: j.fabius@ahk.nl

Since 1990, **Thomas Lehmen** has been living and working in Berlin. As a dancer he has performed with Yoshiko Chuma, Pauline de Groot, Sasha Waltz & Guests, Detektor, Mark Tompkins and others. In 1997, he created his first solo and has been making his own work since. All his performances show a concern with transcending conventional forms of dance performance and in questioning the roles of and communication between choreographer, performer and the audience, e.g. in the choreographic experiment Schreibstück (2002), Lehmen acted as the "author" of a dance script that is presented to three choreographers to interpret. E-Mail: thomaslehmen@thomaslehmen.de

Susan Rethorst has been creating dances since 1975. Her work has been presented by many New York venues including The Museum of Modern Art; The Kitchen Center, Dance Theater Workshop, Danspace Saint Marks, as well as at various dance theaters, universities, and festivals throughout the U.S. Internationally her work has been produced by The Holland Festival, Spazio Zero Rome, The Kunsthalle Basel, The Aix-en-Provence Festival, among others. In 1999, she was the recipient of a fellowship from the John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Foundation. She has recently co-initiated SUPA (studio Upson in Pennsylvania), a program dedicated to choreography: how it is thought of and taught, and what of its knowledge is applicable to other fields. E-Mail: s.rethorst@ahk.nl

¹ Formerly Dance Unlimited Amsterdam. Accredited by the NVAO (Accreditation Organisation of the Netherlands and Flanders), the official diploma title will be "Master of Dance" as listed in the CROHO (Central Register of Higher Education Programs) with the special orientation of "choreography". A total of 120 ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) will be earned during the two-year study.

ADMISSION GUIDELINES

Deadline: November 25, 2007

Queries: Ellen van Haeringen (Dance Department Secretary)

E-Mail / Phone Contact: e.vanhaeringen@ahk.nl / +31205277644

More Information: <http://www.ahk.nl/choreography>

A. Admission Procedure

The Amsterdam Master of Choreography (AMCh) offers a study course for dance artists who are interested in augmenting their existing professional practice through immersion in a rigorous, two-year Master level arts research program. The course provides the support structure and organization to facilitate choreographic and interdisciplinary practice-led research, with an emphasis on the processes of praxis, or *metapractice*. The admission procedure is designed to engage prospective applicants in an exploration of relevant research questions, disciplinary perspectives and conceptual/ empirical methods.

B. Admission Criteria

The **minimum** formal criteria for admission to the AMCh study course include:

1. A Bachelors Degree in Dance that meets the qualifications for choreographer as outlined by the Network of Dutch dance academies in 2002 (see G. Exemption and Appendix).
2. Three years work experience in the professional field of dance as performer and/ or choreographer.
3. A well-articulated Motivation to expand practice-based research activities that demonstrates: (a) a desire and an openness for new information, and (b) compatibility with the educational vision of the program (c) an ability to manage a predominantly independent, self-steered study program.
4. A clearly formulated Research Plan.

C. Required Submission Material

1. Curriculum vitae showing history of dance education and practice.
2. Two written recommendation(s) from professional choreographers, colleagues, artists, scholars and/ or teachers in the field of choreography.
3. Videos, dvd's and/or web-based documentation; and reviews and/or essays pertaining to previous and current work.
4. Examples of your own writing are welcome; whether about your own work or the work of others.
5. Motivation and Research Plan (max 1000 words in total): see #3 above for Motivation guidelines (and comment on the reason for pursuing a Master of Choreography and specifically the choice of AMCh). The Research Plan presents the research to be undertaken during the course and includes research questions and methods. Method here can be broadly interpreted as whatever means or assistance you might

use to gather, organise and analyze information. For example: a bibliography, desired external mentor(s), interdisciplinary intersects (relations to science, philosophy, politics, ethics, other artistic genres, etc.), list of current and potential collaborators (e.g. performers, dramaturges, designers, etc.) and technical requirements may all be methodologically relevant to your practice-led research.

D. First Round Selection:

A special selection committee will review the required materials submitted by all the applicants. From this initial group, a number of applicants will be selected to advance to the second round. These candidates will be invited to prepare a presentation of their research goals in an interview with a small committee to be scheduled January 2008.

E. Second Round Selection: Interview

The special selection committee for the second round will comprise the Director of the AMCh program, core staff members and an external reviewer from the field of choreography. This committee will review and evaluate the submitted materials; and conduct and evaluate the interview process.

In preparation for interview: each invited candidate will be asked to respond to research specific questions from the review committee prior to the interview process; and to prepare a draft design of the individual residency bringing the proposed research plans into alignment with AMCh program resources.

During the interview: the candidate will be asked to elaborate on the motivation to study with AMCh and the proposed research plan. The interview process will be guided by six, self-reflective qualifying criteria in which the candidate will be asked to reflect on their past professional experience, current special interests and career goals.

The criteria will function as discursive markers, enabling a conversation that will help the committee and the candidate evaluate the synergy between the AMCh's educational goals and the candidate's. The questions probe the candidate's ability to:

1. develop a creative and articulate approach to present the body in dance and/or other related art works
2. network and create structures to sustain their work
3. demonstrate a knowledge about the social, political and economic context and implications of their choreographic work
4. further develop production and managerial abilities, and be able to solve problems within complex situations.
5. to comprehend, write and speak critically, regarding developments, representations and presentation of the body in dance and its discourses in modern philosophy and science.
6. develop the capacity to reflect on his or her own actions to come to improvement, and communicate the conclusions of past projects and rationales for future initiatives.

F. Final Selection for Admission

The Second Round Selection committee will make the final selection and the candidates will be notified on their admission status within two weeks from the interview date.

G. Exemption

The selection committee is entitled to exempt candidates from the minimum formal criteria for admission (specifically the Bachelors Degree in Dance and / or 3 years professional experience) if the candidate meets the Qualifications as listed in the appendix below and the other criteria for selection. The candidate seeking an exemption may have these competences in another arts discipline, but then must use the other criteria and submission materials to convince the selection committees.

Appendix

Qualifications: the expected competences of a graduate Bachelor of Choreography (These competences are taken into consideration during the selection process.)

Vision: The choreographer shows the ability to acquire ideas and convictions on his own profession and has the inner necessity to communicate these and make them productive in choreographies.

Creative potential: The choreographer has the capacity to be creative with intuitions, observations, impressions and emotions by translating these in concepts and artistic ideas and shape them in choreographies.

Collaborative potential: The choreographer is capable to collaborate with others involved (often multi-disciplinary) to contribute actively to a shared product or process.

Communicative potential: The choreographer has the capacity to inform, consult and account for his actions in diverse professional contexts both orally as well as in written form effectively and efficiently.

Analytic potential: The choreographer has the capacity to analyse artistic products and processes.

Craftsmanship: The choreographer has the capacity to apply a broad scale of instrumental skills and craftsmanship professionally in choreographies.

Entrepreneurship: The choreographer has the capacity to independently create himself a professional existence within the world of dance.

Open for environment: The choreographer has the sensitive capacity to signal relevant factors of the social environment and to use them in dance productions.

Learning potential: The choreographer has the capacity to learn, and sustain learning within dance.

Reflective potential: The choreographer has the capacity to reflect on his own actions to come to improvement.

Innovative potential: The choreographer has the capacity to explore possibilities, to do research and to experiment in the profession.

Organizing potential: The choreographer has the capacity to organise the creative and production process purposefully and efficiently.