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Wine and Swish:

Rebecca Ann Hobbs' Dancevideos in the Mall



Fig. 1. Rebecca Ann Hobbs, *Otara at Night* (2011). Single-channel HD Video, colour, sound, 2 minutes 9 seconds, looped. Dancer: Amelia Lynch, with help from: Tanu Gago, Leilani Kake, Graeme Marshall and Ema Tavola. Track: *Limb By Limb*, Cutty Ranks, Reggae Anthology, VP Records. See <http://rebeccaanhobbs.com/works/video/>

Over the past decade, video works by Rebecca Ann Hobbs have enabled particular kinds of performance to make an appearance within art galleries in Aotearoa New Zealand. Hobbs' "dancevideos" present "networked choreography," or choreographies that are self-taught following examples of dance content uploaded to the internet, from dancers across the globe.¹ I argue that Hobbs's dancevideos enact diverse choreographies and complex relations, extending the triangulation of performance, choreography and gallery to include video content as well as the web. Both *Otara at Night* (2011) and *Mangere Mall* (2011) evoke prior instances of spectatorship and are the results of processes of research, mimicry,

rehearsal, repetition, improvisation, collaboration and performance to camera. *Otara at Night* presents a solo female dancer performing a dancehall style number while *Mangere Mall* images a collective of young dancers voguing. Taken together, the two works exhibit the different ways choreography taken from popular dance can be utilised to perform gender identities: through the pneumatic *wine* of the empowered female dancehall performer and the ambiguously gendered, queer *swish* of the voguer.

The first part of this paper focuses on the context of *Otara at Night*, its exhibition and central aspects of the popular dance style that is dancehall, before further elucidating a concept of networked choreography. The second half of this paper looks at *Mangere Mall*, broader issues of the performativity of gender, and the possibility of queer choreography. Shot in shopping malls, both videos hark back to English artist Gillian Wearing's *Dancing in Peckham* (1994), which depicted an isolated individual dancing unabashedly in a public and commercial environment to the bewilderment of passers-by, who became spectators. Yet Hobbs's works differ from Wearing's, because in both dancevideos the malls are deserted so the role of passer-by is delayed and then delegated to those who watch the works in the gallery. In summary, this paper examines relations between dancers, choreographers, communities, archives dances, and audiences—whether live, anticipated or imagined.

Wine: *Otara at Night* (2011)

It is night-time. A series of large, concrete, zig-zagging steps lead up to a row of three shops. The shopfronts have old-fashioned painted signs and all three are covered with roller doors to prevent burglaries. Music starts, the soundtrack is a reggae song with a distinctively Jamaican-sounding male voice and a low-fidelity, synthesiser back-up track. Dancer Amelia Lynch stomps into the locked-off frame in very high-heeled shoes. Lifting her feet up high before firmly planting one in front of the other, one hand clicks her fingers to the beat. Exaggeratedly swinging her hips from side-to-side she steps up to the stage, positions herself in the centre of the frame, and with her back to the camera begins to dance. Shimmying her torso forwards and making a waving motion with both upper arms from the elbow, she drops into a wide squat position. With her arms lowered, inner wrists just above each knee, she performs a *wine* or isolations of her hips back and forth and from side to side in time to the music. Dressed as though she just came from a night club, Lynch is heavily made-up, wearing fitted leggings, a silver-sequinned top, elaborate jewellery and hoop earrings. While dancing, she generally orients herself with her back to the camera or in profile, depending on which angle affords the best view of a sequence of movements.

Otara at Night (see Fig. 1) is by Australian-born, Auckland-based artist Rebecca Ann Hobbs. Originally from Black River in Far North Queensland, at the time the work was made Hobbs was living in Otahuhu and teaching at the Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) in Otara. Both Otara and Otahuhu are suburbs in the South of Auckland and *Otara at Night* is part of 'South,' a series of works Hobbs made in South Auckland spaces influenced by dance cultures. According to the 2013 New Zealand Census, 7 percent of the total population identified with at least one Pacific identity, compared with 14.6 percent of people in the

Auckland region, 45.7 percent in the Otara-Papatoetoe Local Board area and 60 percent in the Mangere-Otahuhu Local Board area (Statistics New Zealand, 2013). This work was intended to be a celebration of the style of dance known as dancehall and the way in which it has been interpreted by certain bodies and in specific sites in South Auckland (Hobbs, 2011b).

Otara at Night participated in an important moment in the recent history of curatorial practice in New Zealand. The work was included in the exhibition *WWJD?*, curated by Ema Tavola at Fresh Gallery, which is located just a few doors down from where the video was shot. For Hobbs, to be included in the exhibition

was a great honour and opportunity, it was a great honour for me in one regard because I'm an artist from outside of this context. I come from Australia, and living and working here and making my work specifically about South Auckland, it was really important that it got contextualised in Otara and specifically Fresh Gallery. (Hobbs in Gago, 2012)

WWJD marked the sixth anniversary of the gallery and was the final show for Auckland-based Fijian curator, Tavola, as gallery manager. During her time at Fresh, Tavola consolidated her reputation as a passionate and strident advocate for arts in and of South Auckland (*WWJD*, 2012). The title of the exhibition plays with the popular 1990s phrase 'What Would Jesus Do?' evoking instead Cook Islands curator Jim Vivieaere (1947–2011). Having been mentored by Vivieaere, Tavola was deeply influenced by his "empowering and validating" curatorial and visual arts practice which represented "a bold and articulate statement about Pacific diaspora experience" (Tavola, 2011). Tavola acknowledged that "I'll always think of Jim, in every show that I curate and ask myself, what would Jim do?" Reflecting, Tavola remembers Vivieaere's advice to her: "When you are developing a show, you build it around an artwork that you fall in love with, that you love and everything else sort of complements that work, that's how I've curated" (Tavola in Gago 2012).

In the case of *WWJD* Tavola began with Hobbs's *Otara at Night*, partly because she was involved in the process of its making and partly because of her own interest in dancehall culture and movement. Hobbs herself added in an email to me on November 4, 2016, that it was important that the work be exhibited in "the same community that it was made in and for." Tavola's *WWJD*, an exhibition which paid homage to a prior generation of curatorial practice and that took place within Otara's Fresh Gallery, is integral to the specific context of Hobbs' video work.

This video runs for two minutes but is looped so that it appears continuous, Lynch entering just left of the camera and exiting to the right, only to enter from the left again. Lynch's solo was filmed in one continuous, unedited shot, on Otara's Fair Mall stage. As is the case with other works in Hobbs's *South* series, such as *Mangere Bridge: 246 Meters* (2010) and *Mangere Mall*, *Otara at Night* was inspired by the ways communities use specific architectural or built environments. Utterly site-specific, all three videos were shot in response to Hobbs's observation of the embodied relationships various communities have

with particular places. The location is one that would be familiar to many Aucklanders as it is close to the mall's carpark where a large market is held every Saturday morning. In fact, the markets themselves often serve as a stage work for artworks. For example, Jeremy Leatinu'u filmed his performance *Public Observations II* (2010) there and Australian artist Keg de Souza ran workshops there one market day during the 13th Auckland Triennial in June 2013. However, departing from the familiarity and bustle of Otara on a Saturday morning, Hobbs's work was filmed at night, a time when many Aucklanders might perceive Otara as a threatening or dangerous place to be. With the videoed performance, Hobbs attempts to reclaim the darkened space at a time when it is deserted. Crucially she does this via a female, dancing body. By locating Lynch's movements in the mall, at night, Hobbs images a feminist occupation of such a space.

In the 2013 census, the median income in the Otara-Papatoetoe area was \$21,100 (NZD) compared with a national average of \$28,500 (NZD) and indeed the popular perception of Otara is that it is a lower-income area with a high crime rate (Statistics New Zealand 2013). Therefore, Lynch's dance occupies a space which is convivial and welcoming during the day, yet at night might seem racialised, impoverished and even threatening. Spaces within a city at night are also heavily gendered, even masculinised according to feminist geographers such as Gillian Rose. Rose points out that spaces are "not necessarily without constraint" and spatial freedom is something "only white heterosexual men usually enjoy" (Rose 1993, 34). Indeed, "[s]exual attacks warn women every day that their bodies are not meant to be in certain spaces" (34). For this reason, women experience an unease and fear of public spaces, particularly at night. Citing feminist geographers Gill Valentine and Rachel Pain, Rose further argues that "women's sense of security in public space is profoundly shaped by our inability to secure an undisputed right to occupy that space" and, on some occasions, even to move through that space (34). In poet June Jordan's words: "This holds throughout the world for women and literally we are not to move about in the world freely. If we do then we have to understand that we may have to pay for it with our bodies" (Jordan, quoted in Rose 1993, 34).

Within Hobbs's *Otara at Night*, Lynch not only demonstrates mobility within such a potentially dangerous nocturnal space, she dances. Moving on from its spatial context, the video involves Lynch's performance of a very specific kind of choreography, that of dancehall repertoire, one that she has experience and knowledge of (Hobbs in Gago 2012). When Hobbs was working in Otara, she used to meet Tavola and Tanu Gago, a fellow filmmaker and dancer, at Fresh Gallery. In an email with the author on November 9, 2017, Hobbs explained that from there, the friends would often go to clubs such as Matafaga, which was just across the road. Patronised almost exclusively by locals with Pacific Island heritage, English was rarely heard, and it was in these spaces that dancehall repertoire was performed. Having previously taught herself the style by watching YouTube video clips—observing the moves, practising, and putting them altogether—Hobbs enjoyed going out to clubs and performing them in a social setting.

During pre-production of *Otara at Night*, Hobbs used word-of-mouth throughout the dance community to find a dancer who was confident with dancehall, and it was through this call

that she found Lynch. A teacher of urban dance in Auckland's central city, Lynch had also learnt dancehall through online videos. According to Hobbs, those in Auckland who participate in dancehall are "internet savvy," using online platforms "effectively and with clarity" (personal communication November 4, 2016). In the accompanying artist statement, Hobbs indicates that her intention was for *Otara at Night* to be a "celebration of dancehall and the reinterpretation of culture through site" (Hobbs 2011b). As part of a broader investigation of specific dance styles from abroad, Hobbs's interest is in how dance translates geographically, is manifested locally, and the ways in which styles maintain their integrity yet also change their flavour and take on new forms (Hobbs, quoted in Gago 2012).

Dancehall culture has a long and complicated history, as traced by Sonjah Stanley Niaah (2010). The dancehall scene originated in Kingston, Jamaica and it is one aspect of Jamaica's popular performance culture (Stanley Niaah 2010, xv). Elaborating on what I would argue is a possible temporal context for *Otara at Night*, media theorist and filmmaker Julian Henriques explains that in Jamaica "a dancehall night out means precisely that, a night in the open air, under the stars, out on the street" (Henriques 2010, 61). Henriques theorises that in most popular cultures the "cycle of pleasurable activity is synchronized with that of the working week" (61). In Auckland, Friday and Saturday nights are the most popular nights to go out but in Kingston, the main night is Wednesday and this, together with the way dancehall sessions traditionally go until dawn, suggests for Henriques a "Jamaican disavowal of the work ethic that some would attribute to origins in the slave plantation" (Henriques 2010, 61).

In the same way that Hobbs has described *Otara at Night* as depicting a South Auckland dancehall queen claiming Otara as a stage to perform her nocturnal dance, Stanley Niaah asserts dancehall events involve such a "central female persona" (Stanley Niaah 2010, 138). A marked ascendancy of female figures in the dancehall scene accompanied what Stanley Niaah calls a "maturation of Jamaican cultural expression in the years after independence was gained in 1962" (138). This contributed to increased independence of women in the context of dancehall, and during the 1970s, dancehall queens emerged as informal community celebrities. Resonating with Lynch's performance upon the stage in Otara's mall, Stanley Niaah elaborates:

For the dancer, and the queen in particular, dancehall is a stage, an institution that bestows a status outside the social constrictions of everyday life, a space in which to emerge and maintain stardom on the basis of physical attributes and/or dancing ability. It is also a platform on which women can define the terms and conditions of success, style and contestation, creating place and space for other women. (138)

Stanley Niaah observes that after 2000, economic activities such as street-vending meant that women had achieved some degree of independence and as a result began to attend events on their own. With less of an emphasis on partner dancing, women began to attend events with friends rather than partners, and there was an "element of free play among

women in particular as new levels of economic and social independence were reached" (141). The interrelationship between dance and gender is explored by Stanley Niaah who explains the way in which dancehall performers might be classified according to their particular kinaesthetic emphasis. For example, classically female dances are those "in which the essential point of articulation is the rotation or thrust of the pelvic girdle" (142). This articulation is seen in Lynch's *wine* at the start of her dance.

Lynch's performance in *Otara at Night* is lively and infectious, and this ties into Henriques' argument that the "sharing of appreciation and expression of rhythm" are key elements of dancehall (Henriques 2014, 80). Rhythm is a means of communication as well as an "energetic patterning process" (80). Henriques theorises that the three elements of the performance techniques of rhythmic embodiment are: amplification, inflection and transduction. Rhythmic inflections occur when certain beats in a regular periodic meter are selected for additional emphasis. One way Lynch emphasises certain beats in the accompanying music is by standing with one foot in front of the other and quickly *dipping* or bending herself back at the waist and flicking her head and long ponytail backwards. Transduction is a "transformation process whereby the patterning of signal, wave or disturbance in one medium is translated into another medium" (82). One example Henriques gives is of a dancer "hearing a rhythm in her ears and over her body and then transforming this into a dance move" (82). *Otara at Night* can be read as Lynch's response to an audible rhythm, and the transformation of such rhythms into improvised dance moves using dancehall repertoire.

Within its locked-off frame, *Otara at Night* captures and realises diverse enthusiasms and inter-personal relations. In a curatorial capacity, there was the mentorship and apprenticeship of Ema Tavola to Jim Vivieaere. On a personal level, there was the friendship between Tavola and Rebecca Ann Hobbs, both of whom were heavily invested in facilitating art of and for South Auckland communities. There was also the collaboration between Hobbs as an artist with dancer Amelia Lynch supported by Tavola, Tanu Gago and others. In terms of the relationship between artist Hobbs and dancer Lynch, it is important to emphasise the fact that Lynch herself choreographed the dance she performed in *Otara at Night*. And finally there was the auto-didacticism of Hobbs and Lynch, who taught themselves dancehall moves by watching videos on the internet posted by other dancers and choreographers. Hobbs' video extends the relations between performance, choreography and the gallery to include the internet.

A focus on relations and choreography is enabled by a specific conception of the term. Instead of choreography as the notation or composition of dances, the emphasis is on the relations realised by each instance of choreography. Theorist Petra Sabisch posits any instance of choreography as a 'relational assemblage,' (Sabisch, 2001, 8) and philosopher Erin Manning concurs, conceiving of choreography "not as the organizing principle of precomposed bodies" but as an "activity of arranging relations 'between bodies'" (Manning 2013, 76). Although *Otara at Night* was performed upon a stage within a very specific site, and shot with a fixed camera and presented on a single screen, any further unfolding of the work necessitates an analysis of choreographies that are self-taught from dance content

uploaded to the internet, by dancers across the globe. Such choreography, that is networked, enacts or makes manifest digitally mediated relations between bodies.

To bring into the discussion networks of dancers and choreographers means focusing upon what philosopher Michel Foucault refers to as ideas of 'extension' rather than 'site'. (Foucault 1986, 23). In the second half of the 20th century, Foucault described what he perceived as an "epoch" of "simultaneity," "juxtaposition," "the near and far," the "side-by-side" and the "dispersed" (23). Such an experience of the world, for Foucault, is "less that of a long line developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein" (22). When describing the way that social media has impacted upon inter-subjective relations more than three decades later, media theorist Geert Lovink argued that the social is now manifest as a network, which is the "actual shape of the social" (Lovink 2012).

Within dance studies, scholar Harmony Bench argues that digital networks are increasingly important in the creation and distribution of choreography. She describes the way platforms such as YouTube produce and proliferate performances, as well as enabling dances and choreographies to become "archivable content" (Bench 2017, 155–56). What Bench refers to as "movement archives" act as "generative repositories of the present and recent past for contemporary audiences" (166). It is arguable that this point in the 21st century, there is more of an emphasis on archival records than on live dancing bodies and that dances which permeate dance pedagogy are kept in digital archives (160). Dance practices, according to Bench operate as part of digital culture so that "dancing *like* the archive" and "dancing *for* the archive" have become strategies of dance production (156, emphasis added). As a dancer learning dancehall from on-line videos, Lynch interacted with movement archives before going on to perform the archive for *Otara at Night*. Her performance then returned to the archive as the dancevideo was uploaded to Hobbs' personal YouTube channel for all to see.

Bench points out the popular dance styles such as dancehall have become heavily mediated so that the reach and circulation of its choreographies has dramatically increased (160). Dancehall has thereby become part of many different cultural repertoires via re-enactment, restaging and reperformance. Bench argues for a logic of circulation, one that is enabled by a unique and specifically "asynchronous relationship between performer and viewer", as performances or dances can be viewed on-line, in multiple locations and at multiple times (159). Such circulation allows choreographies to persist regardless of any distinction between the live and the recorded, or the performed and the archived.

Digital movement archives have become a crucial meeting place of amateur and professional dancers and choreographers, as well as a place for dance performance and pedagogy. It is common for dancers who have mastered a choreography, and sometimes the choreographers themselves, to "share" dances in online tutorials, demonstrating choreographed routines or teaching popular steps to viewers (162). Online videos have become a significant mode of teaching and transmitting movement. For Bench, such archives demonstrate a departure from earlier models of dance pedagogies with their

emphasis on a body-to-body transmission of knowledge (156). Therefore, platforms such as YouTube, which act as digital archives of dance, create a broader context of training and rehearsal alongside performance and its documentation (160). Bench points out that learning choreography from a video maintains a bodily separation, “replacing physical intimacy between teacher and learner in a shared space with dancers’ anonymity and instructor’s distance” (160). There is a transmission of movement and a “circulation of mediatized gestures which maintain a separation between bodies not likely to share a physical space,” such as dancehall dancers in Jamaica and dancers based in Aotearoa New Zealand. Importantly, choreographies are kept in circulation by those like Lynch learning and restaging them, adding their own performances to the mix, so that movement archives support modes of learning, and then performing or re-performing choreography (164).



Fig. 2. Rebecca Ann Hobbs, *Mangere Mall* (2011). Single-channel HD video, colour with sound, 4 minutes 28 seconds, looped). VOGUE Dance Crew. With help from: Graeme Marshall, Julie Tapper, Ema Tavola and the Mangere Mall Staff. Track: Tropicalinare by Cat Ruka and Joshua Rutter of Sweat City Heat Wave. <http://rebeccaannhobbs.com/works/video/>

Swish: Mangere Mall (2011)

It is daytime. A series of locked-off shots from different perspectives show the empty expanse of a covered mall. The music is tinny, beginning with a synthesised, marimba-like melody. Six young dancers strut into the space, four of them scatter themselves around the central space whilst two enter it and squat, heads lowered, hands touching the ground, facing outwards and away from each other. The two rise, waving their bodies sinuously and making contrasting wave like forms with their arms and hands. Unlike *Otara at Night*, *Mangere Mall* is heavily edited, cutting from mounted camera to camera in time with the music, and allowing the dancers’ movements to be captured from multiple angles. The dancers alternate between facing outwards, towards the four different sides of the space, and turning inwards and facing each other. The duet becomes a dance of four as two more

dancers enter the central space and join in. Intriguingly, the dancers never seem to be performing to camera, either dancing to each other or to the empty mall around them.

Like *Otara at Night*, *Mangere Mall* is part of Hobbs's *South* series of video works which were shot in South Auckland spaces and influenced by dance. The mall of the title is located near an industrial centre, and it is one of several developments the government instigated during the 1970s, as part of a state housing program (Hobbs, 2011b). During the late 1970s and 1980s, the area saw an influx of immigrants from the neighbouring Pacific Islands who came to work in the surrounding industrial areas and settled there. Originally an open-air mall, the community designed the canopy structures and skylights so that they could gather and move between shops without being affected by inclement weather. The result is a covered mall that is nonetheless spatially expansive and filled with light, which streams through skylights. These are a feature in themselves, supported by distinctive structures that resemble tree trunks and are painted with palm motifs. Beyond the visual aspects of the architecture, what interests Hobbs are the embodied relationships to place and the way communities use the space for their own ends (Hobbs, 2017a). This community is partially represented in the voguers' fluid groupings and dispersals, which contrasts to the vast architectural space. Similarly, their undulating movements also contrast to Hobbs's balanced and symmetrical framing, which creates a wide, almost detached perspective, almost as if we were at the theatre. We might see this group but we are not part of it, unlike the more intimate, invitational style of *Otara at Night*.

For this environment, Hobbs decided to use a dance troupe from the Waikato, an area just south of Auckland. Even though the VOGUE crew had been winning competitions, they experienced resistance from dance communities due to their decision to engage with the popular dance style of voguing (Hobbs 2017). Nevertheless, the collective was breaking new ground, learning the popular dance style from videos seen online. Videoing while the mall was closed, six members of the crew danced their own choreography whilst being recorded by nine cameras simultaneously. In order to capture the mall's vast architectural features, Hobbs made the decision to use go-pro cameras with their built-in wide-angle lenses, each mounted to the mall's architectural elements. Recording simultaneously, this meant that Hobbs could later edit the performance, cutting between the many angles afforded her by the multiple mounted cameras, all evenly spaced, at the same height, and maintaining symmetrical framing of the architecture. The music was created by colleagues Cat Ruka and Joshua Rutter. Hobbs was assisted again by Tavola, her mum did the catering and the dancers were surrounded by their supportive families. Hobbs recalls it was "a family sort of affair" (Hobbs, 2017).

Voguing is a style of dance that originated in the Harlem ballroom scene in New York City during the 1980s. In one of the earliest scholarly accounts, Marcos Becquer and Jose Gatti explain that voguing is in fact a subculture, a dance that was practised casually in gathering places, nightclubs, subway cars and more formally at events called balls. Voguing brings together poses from the magazine of the same name, breakdancing moves, and gestures represented in Egyptian hieroglyphics (Becquer and Gatti 1991, 66). The genre itself is characterised by syncopated movements, angular, linear, rigid poses or

“interruptions” which are then choreographed into dynamic runway walks or sashaying that can then include dips backwards and drops to the ground. For Becquer and Gatti, voguing as a dance form is *syncretic*, meaning it is a tactical articulation of different elements. Importantly syncretism involves a signalling, an historicised interchange between elements based on a complex play of differences and affinities (70). Becquer and Gatti also propose that the Egyptian hieroglyphics element in voguing is a link to African heritage, yet also connects to a white gay tradition of self-display through the exotic and flamboyant re-enactment of narratives. Breakdancing elements connect voguing to black Hispanic gays of hip hop culture which emerged in the South Bronx during the 1970s. That tradition valorised verbal and physical dexterity as well as sublimating “fight into dance,” “conflict into contest,” and “desperation into style and a sense of self respect,” and all those hip hop elements that can be seen in voguing (74). Voguing involves a repositioning of breakdancing elements by re-situating them within an emergent history of black and Hispanic gay pride, critiquing hip-hop’s heterosexist currents.

Contemporary voguing, like dancehall, migrated to Aotearoa New Zealand first through documentary films such as Jennie Livingston’s *Paris is Burning* (1990) and more recently through online videos and tutorials. Hobbs’s intention for *Mangere Mall* was to celebrate “the movement and reinterpretation of culture,” specifically the way various dance forms alter as they manifest in new locations (Hobbs, 2011a). Unlike *Otara at Night*, *Mangere Mall* has enjoyed quite a wide distribution as an artwork, being exhibited in many galleries nationally as well as internationally. The work was included in Hobbs’ 2012 solo exhibitions, *Mangere Mall*, at Sutton Gallery in Melbourne, and *Waack, Whine, Pop and Roll* (2012) in Christchurch’s Dog Park Art Project Space. It was included in the curated group exhibition *In Spite of Ourselves* (2012) at St Paul St, Auckland and The Dowse Art Museum, Wellington and as part of the *Transoceanic Visual Exchange* (2015) Video Art Network Lagos, Nigeria and at Fresh Milk, St. George, Barbados. Just as the dance form of voguing circulated from its original context via on-line videos, tutorials and feature films to make it to New Zealand, it has then been re-articulated by a Waikato-based dance collective before being enacted as part of a dancevideo which has then re-circulated in various exhibitions throughout the world as well as being accessible on-line through Hobbs’ YouTube channel.

To reiterate Bench’s arguments about choreography and the internet, digital or movement archives such as YouTube have acted as generative repositories for the Waikato-based VOGUE dance crew who have learnt to dance from, and ultimately for, the archive. Though it originated in New York city in the 1980s, voguing subculture has extended its reach and circulated through networks, infiltrating cultural repertoires as it is re-enacted, restaged and re-performed. Through the pedagogies of online movement archives choreographies have been transmitted, circulated between bodies that have vast geographical and temporal distances separating them. Movements and movement styles have been learnt through processes of research, training and rehearsal, before going on to use the same platforms for performance and documentation. These endless cycles of watching, learning, training, rehearsing, repetition, performance and documentation are reflected in the way in which *Mangere Mall* is edited. Hobbs’ strategy of multiple camera

angles recording simultaneously enabled her to edit the footage in a playful and rhythmic manner. Recalling Henriques' point about dancehall transduction, Hobbs frequently responds to the rhythm of the music by marking it with abrupt alternations of angles and cuts in the footage, as well as making them correspond with the dancers' actual movements. This style of editing itself echoes the play-back, pausing and slowing down afforded by on-line movement archives.

Vogueing is "a site of interaction for the categories of race, class, gender and sexuality" (Becquer and Gatti 1991, 65). Whereas my reading of *Otara at Night* focused upon the population of a stage in a particular socio-economic and suburban setting, at night, as a feminist gesture, *Mangere Mall* can be read in terms of the way in which it engages with queer identities and dis-orientations. Here the term queer refers to sexual and gender practices that cannot be reduced to either homosexuality or heterosexuality (Corber and Valocchi 2003, 1). Queer is not a shorthand for "lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered," but rather describes "identities and practices that foreground the instability inherent in the supposedly stable relationship between anatomical sex, gender and sexual desire" (1). Queerness can involve an embrace of "non-normative forms of identity" and take up otherness or strangeness, deliberately and wilfully appropriating the term and its position. In terms of these issues of sexuality and orientations, Stanley-Niaah pointed out that the dominant homophobic tendencies in much of Jamaican culture mean that dancehall is explicitly hetero-normative, with male and female heterosexual identities visible in partner dancing through amorous display and sexually provocative or explicit dance styles (Stanley Niaah 2010, 141). This means that the dancehall queen typically manifests heterosexuality. In contrast, as mentioned by Becquer and Gatti, the subculture of voguing has its origins in flamboyant, queer self-display.

According to Judith Butler's thesis of the performativity of gender, any gender identity is in fact constructed, "tenuously constituted in time" and "instituted through a stylized repetition of acts" (Butler 1988, 519). The way in which Butler describes how gender is often performed "under duress" and constraint, is relevant for the performers in Hobbs' dancevideos as, often, youths in Maori and Pacific communities are constrained by the socially conservative and heteronormative ideals of Christian and Mormon churches and the ubiquity of Christianity. This is what Tavola alluded to with her evocation of the phrase 'WWJD?' Moving on, Butler's emphasis upon the specific, corporeal acts by which gender is constituted means that there is also the possibility for cultural transformations of gender through such acts. It is the performative character of any gender identity which means it has the possibility for contesting its reified status. Butler elaborates:

If the ground of gender identity is the stylized repetition of acts through time, and not a seemingly seamless identity, then the possibilities of gender transformation are to be found in the arbitrary relation between such acts, in the possibility of a different sort of repeating, in the breaking or subversive repetition of that style. (520)

Importantly, for Butler, if conceptions of gender are constituted, they are then capable of being constituted differently. Butler describes the “performative fluidity of gender” (528) meaning that it is something that is “put on,” it is playful and “basically an innovative affair” (531).

Since Butler’s proposition of the performativity of gender in the late 1980s, queer theorists have gone some way to theorise what performance of such identities might entail. Sara Ahmed argues that a queer subject within straight culture has no choice but to *deviate*. To be out of line is to de-stabilise these axis, to be oblique or slanted. Ahmed posits “queer moments” as moments of dis-orientation; when things come out of line, the effect is “wonky” or queer (Ahmed 2006, 562). Compared with *Otara at Night*, there are indeed many more asymmetric, unbalanced and wonky moments in *Mangere Mall*. In a much more specific discussion on queer dance, dance historian and curator Clare Croft has posited that such dance involves a sensibility that embraces the “pleasures *and* difficulties of moving between multiple, layered identities” (Croft 2017, 1). Related to Hobbs’ works with their emphasis on popular and social dance styles, Croft also states that one of the broader goals of queer dance is “that social dance and concert dance hold equal import” (4).

The stylised repetition of the queer *swish* of the voguer is seen throughout *Mangere Mall*. *Swish* involves a slightly bent arm, held away from the body whilst doing an exaggerated runway walk. The wrist is relaxed, moving from side to side with the motion of the hips and feet. I have taken the term *swish* from American artist Andy Warhol (1928–87) who used the phrase “acting swish” (Jones 1998, 68). For Warhol, acting swish involves equivocal self-imaging, using clothes, make-up or gesture that can be read as feminine as part of an overall strategy of playing with, un-hinging, or contesting dominant ideas about masculine appearance. A kinaesthetic *swish* is invoked in much of the runway-style walking involved in voguing. This strutting, seen in *Mangere Mall* as the dancers move around the central space, in and out of frame, involves a bounce in the step, a sauntering, a swishing and swaying back and forth of the body. The gender attributes of kinaesthetic *swish* involve fluid hand movements, flourishes, sauntering and walking in an exaggerated and rhythmic manner. I would argue that such movements go some way towards constituting choreographies that are *queer*.

Since the making of *Mangere Mall*, and due to the ongoing efforts of Tanu Gago, voguing has grown in popularity around Auckland (Gordon-Smith 2016, 68). In October 2012, together with Pati Solomoa Tyrell, Gago founded FAFSWAG (a conjunction of fa’afafine and swag) as a platform for Pacific LGBTQTI+ or ‘Rainbow Pasifika’ youth to connect.² Since its founding, the FAFSWAG annual ball, itself modelled after the Harlem voguing balls, has become a fulcrum for the community leading to increased popularity of the form. Since the inception of these balls, which now occur more and more frequently throughout Auckland, six years after Hobb’s *Mangere Mall* it seems difficult to divorce Rainbow Pasifika with their struggles for body sovereignty from the queer choreographies that are performed at such events.

Conclusion

Otara at Night and *Mangere Mall* enact diverse choreographies and complex relations, extending the triangulation of performance, choreography and gallery to include video content. This also includes what Harmony Bench has referred to as online “movement archives,” choreographies that are networked, and the performance of queer identities. Each is firmly rooted in the specificity of idiosyncratic architectural features and embodied encounters with these built environments, using particular forms of popular dance. Historically, *Mangere Mall* harks back to Gillian Wearing’s *Dancing in Peckham* (1994). Indeed, Wearing recently revealed a practice version *Rehearsing for Peckham* in which she filmed herself on VHS in her bedroom in preparation for the public performance. Wearing herself even reflected, “when I look at the work now it feels like a film on YouTube” (Wearing 2014). Like *Otara at Night* and *Mangere Mall*, Wearing’s *Rehearsing for Peckham* evokes private processes of research, rehearsal, mimicry and improvisation before proceeding on to dance in public.

With the two dancevideos discussed in this paper, Hobbs inserts works into galleries that have involved processes of private rehearsal and dance performance to camera, yet also inflects these with the specificity of gestures such as the dancehall *wine* and the vogueing *swish* and their attendant histories, signals and significances. These gestures have been situated within a specific cultural moment, that of an artist from Australia exploring the ways choreographies circulate in and out of bodies and digital archives, only to reappear in South Auckland community spaces. In Hobbs’s artworks they then reappear as moving images in galleries locally and further afield before being exhibited once more in digital, movement archives. *Otara at Night* and *Mangere Mall* enabled galleries to temporarily become spaces in which certain bodies with their attending performances of gender were framed, popular dance styles were re-embodied and particular, localised choreographies were exhibited.

Notes

1. The term “dancevideo” employed here is adapted from Amy Greenfield’s 1983 essay which describes “dancefilms” in terms of “film as a context for dance action,” filmic “transformations of human bodies in motion,” each a dance that can only be performed as a unit in each particular film (Greenfield 2013). Published in 1983, the essay nonetheless identifies examples of dancefilm from 1903 onwards, including Georges Méliès’ *The Ballet Master’s Dream* (1903), René Clair’s *Entracte* (1924), and Maya Deren’s *Ritual in Transfigured Time* (1946).

2. Fa’afafine is a Samoan term which means ‘in the manner of a woman.’ Although born biologically as male, Fa’afafine behave in a feminine-gendered way.

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