


Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Artes Cênicas
Instituto de Filosofia, Artes e Cultura
Universidade Federal de Ouro Preto
ISSN: 2596-0229

MARGINS THAT SHIFT THE CENTER:
poetic spirals in insurgent practices of Rosângela Silvestre,
Astrid González, and Kettly Noël


MARGENS QUE DESLOCAM O CENTRO:
espirais poéticas nas práticas insurgentes de Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González e Kettly Noël

Ana Beatriz Coutinho Rezende

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-9448-5685>

Lara Barbosa Couto

 <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6154-1498>

 doi.org/10.70446/ephemera.v8i16.8325

Margins that shift the center:

poetic spirals in the insurgent practices of Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González, and Kettly Noël

Abstract: This article analyzes the artistic practices of Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González, and Kettly Noël, highlighting how their works articulate body, territory, and spiral temporality. The study investigates how these artists mobilize ancestral and contemporary knowledge to create embodied technologies of resistance and reinvention using qualitative research based on literature review, class observation, and critical analysis. The article shows that their practices challenge linear and Eurocentric conceptions of time, proposing instead a circulation between tradition and contemporaneity. Moreover, it emphasizes the black female body as a political and poetic territory, central to building alternative epistemologies and affirming black presences in Latin American art. The conclusion is that these trajectories not only question imposed margins but also create their own ways of teaching, dancing, and existing, in which the body simultaneously becomes a pedagogical, performative, and discursive space.

Keywords: spiral temporality; Amefricanity; black women; body.

Margens que deslocam o centro:

espirais poéticas nas práticas insurgentes de Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González e Kettly Noël

Resumo: Este artigo analisa as práticas artísticas de Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González e Kettly Noël, destacando como seus trabalhos articulam corpo, território e temporalidade espiralar. Por meio de pesquisa qualitativa com revisão bibliográfica, observação de aulas e análise crítica, o estudo investiga como essas artistas mobilizam saberes ancestrais e contemporâneos para criar tecnologias corporais de resistência e reinvenção. O artigo evidencia que suas práticas desafiam concepções lineares e eurocentradas de tempo, propondo uma circulação entre tradição e contemporaneidade. Além disso, enfatiza o corpo feminino negro como território político e poético, central na construção de outras epistemologias e na afirmação de presenças negras na arte latino-americana. Conclui-se que essas trajetórias não apenas questionam as margens impostas, mas também criam modos próprios de ensinar, dançar e existir, em que o corpo é simultaneamente espaço pedagógico, cênico e discursivo.

Palavras-chave: tempo espiralar; amefricanidade; mulheres negras; corpo.

1 Opening paths



The Dominican philosopher and writer Yuderkys Espinosa Miñoso (2016) highlights that many of modernity's claims were established at the expense of the knowledge and values of racialized communities and peoples. She contends that these groups were never fully summoned into modernity and, when included, it was under imposed terms that required them to sever ties with much of what sustains them. Consequently, for Black and racialized women in Latin America, modernity has never been fully achieved. Responding to this logic, Miñoso proposes a radical ethics that rejects the forced choice between past and present, or ancestry and modernity. Instead, this ethics affirms other modes of existence that integrate spirituality, memory, and political action grounded in the knowledges of Aby Yala.

In recent decades, dance and contemporary performing arts in Latin America have asserted themselves as a field of creation and political contestation, where racialized, peripheral, and dissident bodies produce their own narratives and aesthetics. María del Mar Castillo (2024) emphasizes this movement involves recognizing dance as a cultural practice imbued with meaning, capable of expressing social, spiritual, and historical tensions. A study in Brazil observes a significant shift: practices once restricted to White, middle-class artists are now being challenged by Black and peripheral presences that re-signify the performative space through their embodied and cosmological experiences (Guimarães, 2024). This scenario reveals that the contemporary performance scene is built not in opposition to ancestry, but through a constant negotiation between tradition and recreation.

In this context – and refusing to separate what for us has never been divided – this study investigates how Black Latin American women have articulated ancestral knowledge and contemporary experiences in their artistic practices. As its focus, the article highlights the work of three Black Latin American artists: Rosângela Silvestre (Brazil), Astrid González (Colombia), and Kettly Noël (Haiti). It reflects on how their practices approach the body as a technology of cultural reinvention through performative, pedagogical, and dramaturgical propositions.

To deepen these issues, this article adopts an approach that combines critical analysis of artworks, embodied experience, and theoretical review. The analysis of works by Kettly Noël and Astrid González makes it possible to understand how their creations embody political and spiritual narratives that challenge hegemonic structures. Participant observation during the Silvestre em Sampa workshop in São Paulo in December 2024 and the Silvestre Technique Intensive held in Salvador in January 2025 provided a practical and reflective immersion into the pedagogy of this approach. Furthermore, the critical theoretical review supports the conceptual articulation among body, gender, and culture, engaging with non-colonial critical perspectives.

The article proposes a reading of the embodied arts by bringing together the artworks, pedagogical practices, and creative contexts of these three Black women artists. Their arts are framed as crossroads between tradition and contemporaneity, in which the political and spiritual body



becomes episteme, testimony, and insurgency.

2 Amefrican weavings: body, knowledge, and creation in the feminine

Since the first forced encounters brought about by the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans, Black knowledge systems have met – and at times interwoven – with Indigenous knowledge, constructing in Latin America a hybrid and plural cultural identity that can be analyzed in its particularities and affinities. This interweaving fosters sociocultural dimensions across the continent's various countries and can be understood as deep structures that persist, transform, and reinvent themselves in everyday gestures, rituals, beliefs, languages, and ways of living and creating.

Motivated to reflect on Black experiences and their crossings throughout the Americas, Lélia Gonzalez (1988) introduced the concept of Amefricanity. It is more than an identity marker, it is an epistemological key for thinking on Latin America from its Black and Indigenous roots and from its experiences of territory. For Gonzalez, Amefricanity is a concept that articulates culture, politics, and history – a counter-hegemonic grammar for interpreting the continent through those who have been historically subalternized.

Thus, to consider Black presence in the performing arts in Latin America requires a shift in perspective. It is not merely about inserting Black bodies into already consecrated artistic languages, but about recognizing that these bodies operate as vectors of other forms of knowledge, temporality, and world. Constantly reduced to “Eurocentric classifications such as ‘popular culture,’ ‘national folklore’ etc.” (Gonzalez, 1988, p. 70), these cultures function as technologies expressing cultural and civilizational values and can be read as devices that confront colonialism in the formation of Latin America's cultural identity.

If the concept of Amefricanity provides the common ground for these artistic expressions, it is essential to understand how strategies and practices that confront colonial logics are constructed from within these bodies and territories. In *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (2013), bell hooks presents pedagogy as a radical space of freedom. This view deeply resonates within Black Latin American arts: in contexts of racial, gender, and class oppression, artistic creation often becomes an act of engaged pedagogy. At the margins of the system and in unequal and racialized territories, the processes of teaching and creating are inseparable. To dance, perform, and choreograph is to retell the world, breaking the conventional division between theory and practice. This affirmation holds that knowledge is born from the body, the street, the celebration, the faith, the pain, the memory, and the imagination.

This understanding finds critical development in *Sociología de la imagen: miradas ch'ixi desde la historia andina* (2015). In this work, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui proposes a methodology that rejects the centrality of written discourse and values image, gesture, composition, and orality as



legitimate forms of knowledge. Her critique targets epistemic colonialism, often perceived within Latin American academic circuits themselves, which frequently reproduce colonial epistemological structures and paradigms even when presenting themselves as critical spaces. By asserting that the image—and, by extension, the performing body—also thinks, the author challenges the illustrative logic that relegates the arts to mere expression and repositions them as autonomous producers of thought. This perspective inspires us to reflect on the dramaturgy of contemporary Black performing arts in Latin America. The works that emerge from these contexts operate as acts of creative fabulation that connect times, territories, testimonies, and cosmologies. They are symbolic productions that elude hegemonic categories, functioning as political enunciations, devices of memory, and insurgent fabulations.

In the same vein, the concept of the body-screen, formulated by Leda Maria Martins (2021), deepens the understanding of Black performance as a form of inscribing ancestral knowledge in the present. Rather than a division between body and word, or between gesture and thought, the body-screen is a site of writing, a living palimpsest in which the memories of a people systematically deprived of official archives are inscribed. In Black traditions, the body is not just a support but both medium and message: it dances to remember, to teach, protest and create futures. This idea displaces the centrality of the written text as the primary form of knowledge, affirming the Black body in performance as a technology of survival, creation, and circulation of knowledge.

Black performances in the diaspora function not only as forms of artistic expression but also as continuous acts of self-reinscription in territories that have sought to erase their presence. Black performance – in its multiple languages and geographies – is also a ritual of insistence. Through it, narratives are produced that escape the linearity and fixity of Eurocentric models of thought. Paul Gilroy (2001), in *The Black Atlantic*, highlights the artistic expressions that emerge from the diaspora as counter-discourses to colonial modernity—embodied, fragmentary forms of knowledge that are nonetheless profoundly powerful. Thus, the practices of Black women artists constitute forms of living theory in which the body narrates, reimagines, and reinvents worlds.

In approaching Black expressions in contemporary dance and performance in Brazil, Colombia, and Haiti, this article posits that the primary concern is not solely artistic output, but rather ways of thinking and creating the world. These ways actively move, instruct, reclaim memory, and resist. Black Latin American epistemologies manifest through this interweave of body, memory, image, and politics, thereby dancing new modes of inhabiting and imagining Latin America from the continent's margins



3 The artists: paths, territories, and fabulations

We now turn to the artists upon whom this study focuses. In their works and trajectories, we encounter many of the themes already outlined: spirituality as language, the body as writing, dance as politics. Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González, and Kettly Noël work in distinct territories, yet they share the gesture of inscribing memories, fissuring norms, and affirming Black presences that move, heal, and reinvent. Thus, presenting their trajectories also means approaching their practices as territories of listening and exchange.

A relevant point to be raised is that, in contemporary Black artistic practices, the issue of territory presents itself in a fluid and multifaceted way. The trajectories of these artists transcend physical borders, circulating through different countries and continents, reflecting the complexity of the African diaspora and its unfolding in Latin America. This circulation does not dilute their Latin American roots; on the contrary, it reinforces the construction of a plural identity that dialogues both with their territories of origin and with the spaces through which they move. Understanding this fluidity is essential for apprehending Black cultural production as a living process of reinvention, resistance, and transnational connection that incorporates displacement and hybridity without losing its ties to ancestral matrices. This perspective broadens our gaze and acknowledges that contemporary Black Latin American art is in constant motion and its territories are both geographic and symbolic, made of ground, memory, and creation.

Thus, by bringing together the works of Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González, and Kettly Noël, this study proposes a deep dive into practices that generate profound displacements within the field of contemporary art. Their creations not only challenge established canons and protocols but also inaugurate new centralities—other ways of teaching, composing, and performing grounded in Black, feminine, and Latin American epistemologies. Moreover, these artists do more than challenge the canons: they contribute to repositioning the coordinates of the sensible. They change marginality into generative power: they create languages, establish principles, organize sensibility, and call into question the boundaries of what is known as contemporary art. By moving from the edges, they displace the center, remapping aesthetic and political legitimacy.

3.1 Rosângela Silvestre: memory and spirituality in the pedagogy of the body

Born in Salvador, Bahia, Rosângela Silvestre is a dancer, choreographer, researcher, and creator of the *Silvestre Technique*, developed since 1982 through an approach that integrates the body, live music, ancestral symbols, and elements of nature. For more than four decades, she has taught in Brazil and abroad, contributing to national and international dance companies and



festivals. She also incorporates the symbology of the *orixás* into her pedagogical practice, building a dance that is technical, ancestral, and grounded in spiritual corporeality.

According to Silvestre, the Silvestre Technique is born from this sense of restlessness and not just a method of bodily training. It is a creation philosophy, in which body, spirituality, and language intertwine. “Nowadays, it carries this seed, not aiming to follow any particular style, it is a technique to awaken” (Silvestre cited by Oliveira, 2018, p. 146). Rather than training the body, the technique seeks to awaken it to its ancestral, spiritual, and critical potential. It conceives the body as a universe as three triangles associated with the elements of earth, water, air, and fire.

The axis of analysis for Rosângela Silvestre is pedagogy as an aesthetic, political, and epistemological construction. Pedagogy here refers to the conscious and intentional act of transmitting knowledge—not only in a technical sense, but also as a cultural, symbolic, and political process. It involves reflecting on how to teach and create methodologies that inscribe bodies, histories and values. This displaces the focus from the *final product* (the work) to the process itself – to the modes of circulation of knowledge and to how the body is shaped as an ancestral-contemporary technology. Silvestre develops a political-spiritual pedagogy articulating ancestry and contemporary language, in which her technique conceives the body as an instrument of cosmological expression. Her practice breaks with the hegemonic paradigms of contemporary dance by staging a sensitive listening to Black ancestralities not purely symbolic but visceral and concrete. The triangles (Image 1), associated with the elements earth, water, fire, and air, which organize the body in space, function both as biomechanical keys and as cosmological tools. This interweaving turns the body into an expanded territory of knowledge, in which spirituality does not oppose technique but rather deepens it (Image 2).

Image 1 – Triangle of intuition, perception and visualization



Source: Facebook *The Silvestre Dance Technique*, 2019

Image 2 – Rosângela Silvestre during pedagogical process of Silvestre technique



Source: Dansehallerne, 2024

More than teaching a sequence of movements, Rosângela Silvestre invites each body to perceive itself as a “universe,” a recurring expression in her practice that points to a pedagogy of expansion rather than containment. Unlike approaches that demand a “clean” and neutral body, the Silvestre Technique values subjectivity, promoting a learning process that is also a reintegration of the body with its layers of knowledge and memory.

It is important to note that when addressing ancestry, spirituality, and subjectivity, there is often a tendency to fall into a collective imaginary that associates these dimensions with abstraction, immateriality, or even a kind of exoticism that empties them of their complexities. The Silvestre Technique challenges these stereotypes by asserting itself as a methodology that does not privilege the mystification of bodily practice over its technical rigor and biomechanical functionality. It is a system of physical preparation and technical development affirms Black epistemologies as formative and constructive forces of the body. The Silvestre Technique inscribes Black epistemologies as legitimate sources of technical, formative, and scientific knowledge, in which Black dances cease to be viewed merely as folk or spiritualized expressions and come to be recognized as practices of bodily construction, discipline, and methodological rigor. It is precisely in the articulation between spirituality, subjectivity, and the science of the body that the technique affirms its uniqueness: a pedagogy in which the welcoming of the invisible does not exclude technical precision – on the contrary, it enhances it.

Her methodology does not rely on fixed formulas but on a pedagogy of the present: in each class, the listening to the group and the environment determines what is necessary. This includes the constant use of live music, which creates a specific vibrational field and makes the space a sacred territory. Her pedagogy is a way of being in the world with the whole body, not as a machine of execution, but as an instrument of perception, critique, and transformation. By making dance a field of Afro-oriented resistance, her practice challenges colonial hierarchies and reinscribes the Black body as a legitimate source of knowledge and artistic invention.



3.2 Astrid González: composition and dramaturgical potency

Astrid González, in turn, builds a body that narrates, welcomes, and denounces. She is an Afro-Colombian multidisciplinary artist whose work lies at the intersection of body, memory, and ancestry. Her practice is deeply rooted in the Afro-Colombian traditions of the Pacific region and is engaged with the experiences of the African diaspora from a critical, sensitive, and insurgent perspective. According to Astrid González (2020), her trajectory as an Afro-Colombian artist is driven by the desire to construct images and embodied experiences that articulate visibility, memory, and corporeality.

Her dramaturgy is marked by a sensitive and reflective appropriation of diverse elements: she builds through media such as light, sound, color, gesture, and word, which intertwine in a dialogue between the racialization processes of Colombia and the living traditions of ancestry. In an interview with Valenzuela and Guzmán (2020), González stated that she “wanted to go beyond the anecdote and speak about the genesis of those behaviors,” emphasizing that the dramaturgical dimension of her work not only narrates individual experiences but also creates scenes that denounce structural oppressions and pave paths of resistance.

Dramaturgy operates as an architecture of meaning. It is the fabric that organizes gestures, times, spaces, and tensions – a way of structuring meaning that does not necessarily depend on text but may be choreographic, visual, or sonic. In González’s work, dramaturgy gains strength as a tool for denunciation and the reconstruction of memory, through scenes in which elements interact and produce narratives on Black experiences and memories in Colombia. Her work is permeated by a spirituality that is not confined to religion but manifests as a vital force and energy inherent in the performative act. This spiritual dimension connects to Afro-Latin American ancestry, giving her creations a quality inviting to reflection on Black Latin American identity in the contemporary world. Thus, she has become a key reference in Afro-Latin contemporary art, revealing how memory and its layers can function as resistance, collective formation, and invent futurities.

Her installation *Drexciya* is a powerful Afrofuturist reiteration, inspired by the sonic narrative of the Detroit electronic music duo Drexciya (1992–2002), which reimagines the myth of Atlantis. González constructs a mythical imaginary of an underwater society of freedom with a dramaturgy that combines video, photography, sculpture, and drawing (Figures 3 and 4) – descendants of the pregnant women thrown into the sea during the transatlantic slave trade. This performative fabulation, beyond evoking a forgotten history, inaugurates an aesthetic and political re-existence that challenges the relationship between memory, trauma, and utopia.



Image 3 – *Drexciya* (2023) at the exhibition
Espesuras: habitar un mundo herido, Medellín, 2025



Source: *Instagram @astridgonzalezq, 2025*

Image 4 – *Drexciya* (2023) at the exhibition
Era uma vez: visões do céu e da terra, São Paulo, 2024-2025



Source: Photo by Isabella Matheus,
published in *Artishock*, 2025

In constructing this narrative, Astrid González's dramaturgy operates through the careful articulation of diverse elements – light, sound, space, and gesture – that intertwine to give form to an immersive, poetic, and critical experience. Her work fosters an active listening from the spectator, inviting them to navigate symbolic layers that transform pain into collective power and invention. Thus, the dramaturgy of *Drexciya* goes beyond mere visual evocation; it proposes a temporal and affective displacement, a space in which body and memory engage in dialogue to imagine possible futures.

As the audience moves through *Drexciya*, they are invited to breathe a new myth, to join a collective pulse that both summons and frees. The installation unfolds as a ritual and a political act, in which ancestral imagination takes form through performative devices that interlace past and present. In this process, it reaffirms the Black body's power as a site of contestation and rewriting, embodying Afro-Latin contemporary dramaturgy as a technology of resistance and aesthetic invention—one that opens fractures and renews meaning within the cultural landscape.

3.3 Kettly Noël: political performativity and the morphology of the body on stage

Born in Port-au-Prince, Haiti, in 1966, Noël is a Haitian dancer, performer, choreographer, actress, and cultural manager. Since 1999, she has lived in Bamako, Mali, where she founded the Donko Seko dance center and the Dense Bamako Danse festival, consolidating her practice as a political, community, and performative space. Her trajectory traverses the territories of the Caribbean and Africa, shaping a plural body of work that reinforces the transnational force of the Black diaspora. In Latin America, Kettly Noël is the founder of the Port-au-Prince Art Performance Festival, launched in 2018 in Haiti, which promotes contemporary dance and trains young artists in dialogue with social critique. Her choreographic and performative production stands out for its aesthetic radicality and political critique, never dissociating the body from history and spirituality. Her practice does not rely merely on cultural references or symbolic quotations: she constructs a language of her own, traversed by the tension between the intimate and the social, between ritual and everyday gesture.

Kettly Noël understands contemporary art as a territory of symbolic and political dispute, marked by historical asymmetries that continue to marginalize Black bodies and epistemologies. For her, occupying this space is a radical gesture of reappropriation. In interviews and public statements, she forcefully expresses her desire for more Black women to enter the contemporary scene with courage, awareness, and willingness to take risks. Her trajectory is, therefore, also a call: an affirmation that the contemporary is not neutral and must be reconfigured through other presences, other histories, and other languages. In this gesture, her artistic practice also becomes a practice of opening—of forging and expanding paths so that more Black women artists may firmly occupy this territory.

Noël's performativity unfolds in a ritual and socially situated space. In dialogue with Haitian Vodou knowledge, contemporary techniques, and improvisation, her works take on mutable forms that cross cultural boundaries. For her, dance does not end on stage: it persists in the community, in teaching, and in circulation. The body, as a cultural mediator, dances to communicate, to share, and to provoke. This extensible, collective, and political performativity reaffirms her place within the contemporary Black Latin American art scene. In her trajectory, Kettly Noël's performative art functions as a technology of power: a sensitive experience, an urban rite, a bodily investigation, and a form of thought production. She expands the field of Black Latin American performance by connecting Haiti and Africa, memory and invention, body and territory—summoning a dance that resists, calls forth, and imagines the future.

Among her many creations, *Zombification* (2017) represents a powerful synthesis of her central themes and aesthetic languages. The work, presented at *Documenta 14* in Athens, is a powerful manifestation of Noël's language: intense, disconcerting, and non-negotiable. Installed among bodies, suspended dolls, (Image 5) sound, and debris, the performance proposes a plunge



into the horrors of history and the liminal zones of the human condition. The cult of the *gédés* in Haitian Vodou, the lifeless bodies from extermination camps, the traces of Atlantic slavery, and contemporary epidemics appear entangled in a choreography of the abject. The scene does not soften pain nor offer consolation – it confronts. Each gesture and performance plays a device of invocation: stage presence performs as embodied absence, as unmediated denunciation (Image 6).

Image 5 – Scenography of the performance *Zombification*



Source: EIRENE, 2017

Image 6 – Kettly Noël in performance



Source: Deutschlandfunk Kultur, 2017

Noël constructs a performativity that operates in the friction between death and life, past and present, silence and outcry. The zombie – central figure in both Vodou mythology and colonial history – is repositioned here not as a passive creature, but as a political body that returns: defiant, permeated, and unsettling. By inviting spectators into this crossing, the artist breaks the ethical fourth wall of contemporary art and transforms the space into a field of symbolic contagion. There is an explicit refusal of aesthetic neutrality: *Zombification* does not represent violence—it circulates it as a living pulse, as a memory that seeps between flesh and concrete.

The power of the work lies precisely in its capacity to inscribe the Black body within a zone of instability, in which gesture, noise, and matter become a language of re-existence. The performative entities that move there do not seek beauty, but truth. It is a body in a state of urgency—one that does not perform characters but extreme conditions of humanity. Rather than narrating, it strains; rather than explaining, it summons.

Kettly Noël's radical performativity unsettles the gaze, dissolves the separations between art, ritual, and politics, and establishes a kind of scene that can only be inhabited through full presence. By mocking death and its colonial metaphors, her art restores the unnameable as a living presence—a gesture of insurrection that does not end but spreads. Thus, Kettly Noël's performativity is inscribed in a continuum of Black practices that crossing geographical and historical borders, reaffirming the power of the Black body as a territory of insurgency and creation.

4 Dialogues and crossroads: body, territory, and spiral-temporality in motion

We have followed the trajectories of Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González, and Kettly Noël, whose artistic practices operate as technologies of resistance and reinvention. We now examine how these artists challenge the boundaries between ancestry and contemporaneity, and how their bodies – female, Black, and Latin American – become political and poetic territories of creation. Each artist, in her own way, pushes the limits of contemporary languages to inscribe Black presences that are simultaneously memories and inventions.

Rosângela Silvestre transforms elements of Afro-Brazilian tradition into a technique of bodily awareness and listening that operates in the present; Astrid González constructs dramaturgies that traverse temporalities and propose scenes in which past, present, and future contaminate one another; Kettly Noël, in turn, turns performance into a political ritual in which the colonial past erupts as an indomitable presence. As Leda Maria Martins reminds us, the “chords of ancestry create supplements that coat the many hiatuses, voids and ruptures forged by the abyssal diasporas” (2021, p. 214), allowing these Black presences to perform their bodies and memories even in the cracks of official history.

In all of them, ancestry is not a citation, but a driving force. Contemporaneity is not rupture, but unfolding. By weaving these temporalities into their works, the artists challenge the linear and Eurocentric logic of history and art, opening space for plural chronologies in which time folds, repeats, and recreates itself through the body in motion. Understanding the practices of Silvestre, González, and Noël means recognizing that their bodies dance simultaneously in the past, the present, and what is yet to come. Within this space of transcreation, tradition and contemporaneity cease to be opposites and become living matter – gesture, rhythm, and fabulation in movement.

The second axis crossing the practices of Silvestre, González, and Noël is the centrality of the Black female body as a political territory. More than bodies marked by gender and race, their bodies become spaces of inscription for memory, struggle, and cultural reinvention. Thus, dance, dramaturgy, and performance are not merely artistic languages: they are strategies of resistance operating in both the symbolic and material realms, challenging the colonality that has historically silenced, domesticated, and exoticized Black female bodies.



Lélia Gonzalez (1988) argues that it is necessary to break with the colonial rationalities that separate emotion and reason, body and thought. In her words: “it is important to emphasize that emotion, subjectivity, and other attributes ascribed to our discourse do not imply a renunciation of reason but, on the contrary, a way of making it more concrete, more human, and less abstract and/or metaphysical. In our case, it is another kind of reason” (Gonzalez, 1988, p. 85). It is this other kind of reason – rooted in experience, orality, and the sensing and moving body – that permeates the works of Silvestre, González, and Noël. When Silvestre calls upon the body as a “universe,” she proposes a displacement: it is not a body to be domesticated, but a body to be listened to. When González dramatizes the violence against Black women in Colombia, she transforms the body into a scene of denunciation and rewriting. When Noël tensions the boundaries between life and death in performance, she inscribes the Black female body as a space of radical defiance.

Their bodies are insurgent territories: spaces in which memories are choreographed, violences denounced, and possibilities imagined. By embracing the materiality of their bodies as a legitimate source of knowledge, these artists challenge the logics that have historically objectified Black women and relegated them to the margins of artistic and social spaces. Although Silvestre’s pedagogy, González’s dramaturgy, and Noël’s performativity constitute distinct paths, they are connected by an ethics affirming the Black female body as archive, place of power, and technology of creation. Their practices do not seek a canonical place within Western molds: they build other canons and centralities, where marks of gender and race are not scars to be erased but living maps to reinvent the sensible. Thus, along the trajectories of Silvestre, González, and Noël, the Black female body is not a mere surface of cultural inscription but a gravitational center of resistance.

The third axis crossing the works of Silvestre, González, and Noël concerns the dialogue among pedagogy, dramaturgy, and performativity. In examining these trajectories, it is evident that these categories – often treated as distinct fields – intertwine in complex and inseparable ways. In the practices of these artists, teaching, constructing, and performing are not isolated gestures: they are dimensions that intersect, contaminate, and mutually enhance one another.

In Rosângela Silvestre, pedagogy is not merely technical training but a space of living creation, in which bodily and spiritual listening guide the process. Her classes take shape as performative scenes that summon the whole body to presence and fabulation, turning teaching into a ritual and a dramaturgy in motion. Dramaturgy appears in the structuring of processes and bodily arrangements that materialize stories, values, and memories. Performativity manifests in the immediacy of each class, in the gesture that is simultaneously creation and sharing, in a body that, through practice, performs and expresses.

Astrid González builds profound dramaturgies that destabilize linear time and mobilize the body as an archive of memories and affections. Pedagogy is inscribed in the construction of her scenes, in which learning occurs through sensitive contact, sharing of pain and resistance, and continuously retelling and reinscribing Black Colombian experiences. Her performativity pulses in the body on stage, which denounces, summons, and activates collective memories.



Kettly Noël creates radical performances in which the body operates as political and spiritual language. Her pedagogy materializes in the community and educational spaces she builds, such as the *Donko Seko* center, where knowledge is shared through collective experiences intertwining art and life. Dramaturgy emerges from fragmented scenes and contemporary rituals in which objects, sounds, and performative presences articulate memories and historical tensions. Her performativity is intense and operates in risk and discomfort, proposing a body acting as discourse.

In the trajectories of Silvestre, González, and Noël, these three dimensions unfold and intertwine in unique ways, yet always rejecting disciplinary boundaries. Pedagogy, dramaturgy, and performativity are not compartments: they are elements in motion that teach, narrate, and imagine simultaneously. The practices of Silvestre, González, and Noël propose other ways of making art and producing knowledge, in which the body is simultaneously school, scene, and discourse.

Meanwhile, in classical Western paradigms – especially until the mid-twentieth century – these categories were largely compartmentalized. Pedagogy was understood as the field of transmission; dramaturgy, as the field of organizing the textual and linear work, and performativity, as we know it today, was not yet widely recognized. The body was seen more as a vehicle for discourse than as discourse itself. These boundaries began to dissolve with performance studies and contemporary practices. Performativity came to be understood as a mode of meaning-making in the very act of presence; dramaturgies ceased to be only fixed and linear structures; and pedagogies began to explore more experimental and embodied forms of teaching. Nevertheless, these intersections are still often presented as shifts or advancements within the field.

In Afro-diasporic and Black Latin American practices, this fluidity is not progress, rupture, or theoretical novelty – it is origin. These practices have never operated within a rigid logic separating teaching, creating, and performing. Learning happens through the body, in collectivity, in sound, in ritual, in lived experience. Knowledge is not abstraction, but presence, gesture, and embodied memory. Pedagogy, dramaturgy, and performativity are not isolated fields but simultaneous modes of communication, creating meanings and materializing discourses.

The practices analyzed here not only traverse these languages, but displace the hegemonic center of artistic creation, producing other ways of teaching, creating, and performing. This displacement does not occur in isolation, as it arises largely from contact, contamination, and tension between dominant languages and Black languages of resistance in Latin America. As Leda Maria Martins (2021) points out, “the experimentation with transdisciplinary and transversal languages reveals attitudes and changes in protocols and aesthetic values” (p. 96). Thus, Afro-diasporic and Black Latin American practices not only take part in these changes, but drive and redirect them, bringing other forms of knowledge into the history of art and the way of making it.



5 Open paths: lessons from the journey and directions for future routes

Dancing times, embodying the world, reinventing paths: the practices of Rosângela Silvestre, Astrid González, and Kettly Noël invite us to dive into territories where body, history, and creation intertwine. One of the most striking powers of these practices lies in their non-linear conception of time: instead of a progressive, tiered chronology – traditional, “modern,” “contemporary” – what operates here is a spiral logic in which past, present, and future alternate, overlap, and are reconfigured through the living gesture. In this context, ancestry is not a distant past but an active presence that guides, teaches, and imagines.

Within this curved temporality, the Black female body assumes centrality. Guardians of knowledge, caretakers of memory, inventors of worlds, Black women have historically been the pillars of Afro-diasporic culture in Latin America. Their presences, though often silenced by official narratives, sustain the foundations of cultural practices that resist, reinvent, and flourish in the folds of time. What Silvestre, González, and Noël show us – each in her own way – is that the body of the Black woman not only carries history; it moves, choreographs, and transforms it.

This power also manifests in how their practices deconstruct the boundaries between teaching, creation, and performance. In Black cultures, these categories do not appear as isolated compartments but as interdependent parts of the same vital gesture. To teach is to create; to create is to perform; to perform is to think. The body, which is also mind; the gesture, which is also concept; and emotion, which is also reason; constitute a way of making art and producing knowledge that rejects the division between reason and emotion, action and thought. On the contrary, they affirm a radical wholeness in which existing and creating occur in full.

The practices of Silvestre, González, and Noël reaffirm that centrality does not necessarily reside in institutionalized places but in gestures capable of moving, questioning, and reshaping the world. Their creative existences contribute to repositioning the referential axes of contemporary art by asserting other ways of knowing, composing, and teaching. By shifting the center—and with it, regimes of visibility, legitimacy, and value, these artists do not just claim a place; they inaugurate new references. Their bodies on stage are not only acts of resistance to hegemonic centers but inventions of other possible worlds, where art exists fully as a vital, political, and poetic practice.

Thus, the trajectories analyzed here not only delineate singular paths within Afro–Latin American dance but also make decisive contributions to cultural studies, Black epistemologies, and art criticism. These practices reshape the meanings of performance, expand the horizons of knowledge, and invite us to imagine other possible worlds. The circulation of these artists and their works throughout Latin America, with all the tensions and richness inherent in such movement, reaffirms the urgency of strengthening networks of visibility, exchange, and research among Black women of the Global South. Ultimately, these artists teach us that making art is also a way of



thinking and transforming the world. Making art in these bodies that dance, teach, and narrate, is to writing the world with their own feet, drawing possible futures through the living gesture.



References

- ALVES GUIMARÃES, Maria Claudia. The Brazilian contemporary dance scene of the periferia. *Pamiętnik Teatralny*, [S. l.], v. 73, n. 1, p. 57–81, 2024. DOI: 10.36744/pt.1623. Disponível em: <https://czasopisma.ispan.pl/index.php/pt/article/view/1623>. Acesso em: 15 jun. 2025.
- ARTISHOCK. *Érase una vez: visiones del cielo y de la tierra*, São Paulo, 2025. Disponível em: <https://artishockrevista.com/2025/04/14/erase-una-vez-visiones-del-cielo-y-de-la-tierra/> . Acesso em: 08 jul. 2025.
- BURKHARDT, Susanne. *Performances auf der documenta 14: Ein Parlament der Körper*. Deutschlandfunk Kultur, [S. l.], 2017. Disponível em: <https://www.deutschlandfunkkultur.de/performances-auf-der-documenta-14-ein-parlament-der-koerper-100.html> . Acesso em: 07 jul. 2025.
- CARRIZO, Diego. *The Silvestre Dance Technique*. [S. l.], 2019. Facebook: @TheSilvestreDanceTechnique. Disponível em: <https://web.facebook.com/share/18mLvBvBfq/> . Acesso em: 07 jul. 2025.
- CASTILLO, María del Mar. Aproximaciones al lugar de la danza contemporánea en la sociología y la antropología de las artes latinoamericanas. *Avances*, Córdoba, n. 33, p. 75–91, 2024. Disponível em: <https://revistas.unc.edu.ar/index.php/avances/article/view/45500> . Acesso em: 15 jun. 2025.
- DANSEHALLERNE. *Rosangela Silvestre – Silvestre Technique*, [S. l.], 2024. Disponível em: <https://danschallerne.dk/en/archive/silvestre-technique/> . Acesso em: 07 jul. 2025.
- EIRENE. *Documenta 14 at the Athens Conservatoire, A place called space*, Atenas, 2017. Disponível em: <https://a-place-called-space.blogspot.com/2017/07/documenta-14-at-athens-conservatoire.html> . Acesso em: 07 jul. 2025.
- ESPINOSA MIÑOSO, Yuderlys. De por qué es necesario un feminismo decolonial: diferenciación, dominación co-constitutiva y fin de la política de identidad. *Revista Solar*, Bogotá, v. 12, n. 1, p. 141–171, 2016. Disponível em: https://om.juscatamarca.gob.ar/articulos/De_por_que_es_necesario_un_feminismo_des.pdf . Acesso em: 15 jun. 2025.
- FROSCH, Joan. *Kettly Noël, Nelisiwe Xaba, Mamela Nyamza*, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, 2012. Disponível em: <https://walkerart.org/magazine/kettly-noel-nelisiwe-xaba-mamela-nyamza/> . Acesso em: 18 jun. 2025.
- GILROY, Paul. *O Atlântico Negro: modernidade e dupla consciência*. Tradução de Cid Knipel Moreira. São Paulo: Editora 34; Rio de Janeiro: Universidade Cândido Mendes, Centro de Estudos Afro-Asiáticos, 2001.
- GÓMEZ, Ana Patricia; GONZÁLEZ Astrid; TORO, Catalina. *Drexciya: un palenque al fondo del Atlántico*, Labalsarte, Medellín, 2024. Disponível em: <https://labalsaarte.com/en/exhibiciones/drexciya-un-palenque-al-fondo-del-atlantico-en/> . Acesso em: 17 jun. 2025.
- GONZÁLEZ, Astrid. *Mi obra [Drexciya], en la exposición Espesuras: habitar un mundo herido*. Medellín, 2025. Instagram: @astridgonzalezq. Disponível em: https://www.instagram.com/p/DK4ij7fuf0l/?img_index=1 . Acesso em: 07 jul. 2025.
- GONZALEZ, Lélia. A categoria político-cultural de amefricanidade. *Tempo Brasileiro*, Rio de Janeiro, n. 92/93, jan./jun. 1988b, p. 69-82.
- GONZALEZ, Lélia. A mulher negra na sociedade brasileira. In: GONZALEZ, Lélia. *Racismo e sexismo na cultura brasileira*. Rio de Janeiro: Pallas, 1988.



hooks, bell. *Ensinando a transgredir: a educação como prática da liberdade*. Tradução de Marcelo Brandão Cipolla. São Paulo: Editora WMF Martins Fontes, 2013.

MARTINS, Leda Maria. *Performances do tempo espiralar, poéticas do corpo-tela*. Rio de Janeiro, Cobogó, 2021.

MAYEN, Gérard. *Kettly Noël, Documenta 14*, [S. l.], [2025]. Disponível em: <https://www.documenta14.de/en/artists/13702/kettly-noel>. Acesso em: 18 jun. 2025.

OLIVEIRA, Luziana Cavalli de. *Mestre King: corporalidade(s) negra(s) no ensino da dança em Salvador*. 2018. Dissertação (Mestrado em Artes Cênicas) – Programa de Pós-graduação em Artes Cênicas, Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, 2018.

PERRELLA MATOS, Adriana; BASTOS, Maria Helena Franco de Araujo. *Kettly Noël: pensamento artístico que desarticula a necroestética*. In: CONGRESSO DA ANDA, 6, 2020, [formato virtual]. *Carnes vivas: dança, corpo e política*. (Coleção *Quais danças estão por vir? Trânsitos, poéticas e políticas do corpo*, v. 9). Salvador: Anda Editora, 2020. p. 239–252. Disponível em: <https://www.eca.usp.br/acervo/producao-academica/003034513.pdf>. Acesso em: 07 jul. 2025.

RIVERA CUSICANQUI, Silvia. *Sociología de la imagen: miradas ch'ixi desde la historia andina*. Buenos Aires: Tinta Limón, 2015.

VALENZUELA, Paula; GUZMÁN, Victoria. *Proyecto sin nombre – Entrevista com Astrid González*. *El Goce*, [S. l.], 14 jul. 2020. Disponível em: <https://elgocerio.home.blog/2020/07/14/proyecto-sin-nombre-astrid-gonzalez/>. Acesso em: 12 jul. 2025.



Academic Biography

Ana Beatriz Coutinho Rezende - Universidade de São Paulo (USP)

Master's student at Programa de Pós-Graduação em Estudos Culturais da Universidade de São Paulo, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil.

E-mail: anaimani@usp.br

Lara Barbosa Couto - Universidade Federal da Bahia (UFBA)

PhD at Programa de Pós-Graduação em Artes Cênicas da Universidade Federal da Bahia, Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

E-mail: laracoutolc@gmail.com

Funding

Not applicable

Ethics Committee Approval

Not applicable

Competing interests

No declared conflict of interest

Research Context

No declared research context

Copyright

Ana Beatriz Coutinho Rezende and Lara Barbosa Couto

Copyright of the translation

Celso Rimoli and Leonardo Maciel

Contribution of authorship (CRediT)

Ana Beatriz Coutinho Rezende: conceptualization and writing – original draft

Lara Barbosa Couto: writing - review and editing

License

This is a paper distributed in Open Access under the terms of the License Creative Commons

Attribution 4.0 <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/deed.pt-br>.

**Evaluation Method**

Double-blind peer review

Editors

Altemar Di Monteiro

Anderson Feliciano

Peer Review History

Submission date: 15 July 2025

Approval date: 07 August 2025