

“A History of –Silencing Dance”

Inspired by Jude Walton's artist made book: *Imprints* made in collaboration with Eva Karczag Arnhem 2009

A History of –Silencing Dance is a multimedia dance-installation/performance by Alireza Keymanesh highlighting excerpts of external historical suppressions (social, political, religious and etcetera) on the dancers' bodies, with a particular focus on Iran. This 50-minute live performance, with the funding contribution of York University, encompasses visual art, sound, music, props, and multi-channel live projection and it is designed to be performed in normal black box venues or in galleries that can be completely dimmed and in a walk-by format.

Dance is an artistic display of each nation's culture and social features. All races and nationalities, even the wildest and primitive tribes of the world, have a form of dance. Likewise, Iranian dance was formed by many fascinating as well as tragic historical events such as the *Authoritarian Islamic Revolution of 1979*, which enforced the end of a successful era for dance and ballet in Iran. According to the principles of the "*cultural revolution*", dancing was considered a great sin, immoral and corruptive. These laws and many other political and social deficiencies caused Iranian contemporary underground dancers to experience more harassment in the past recent years than they have in the past 43: Some of these contemporary dancers were detained, interrogated and banned from teaching dance. A number of them have been victimized and their reputations were damaged due to the systematic posting of fake dossiers on social media. Many were prohibited from leaving the country, and forced to sign documents pledging they would no longer perform contemporary dance. Since most people outside, or even inside Iran have no clue about what has happened to this small community, Alireza felt obligated to react to these oppressive and dictatorial actions through creating this artistic piece. In this sense, *A History of –Silencing Dance* can be viewed as a manifestation against the inhuman effort of a tyrannical government to eradicate a cultural and natural human activity, and is going to be made of honor all the people who kept the art of dance alive during the suppression years after *1979 Islamic Authoritarian Revolution* in Iran until now.

The structure: There are large rolls of paper covering the entire space. The dancers make imprints of their bodies on the papers by wrinkling them from different corners. Live music is being produced by the sound of paper on the spot accompanied by a live violin. There are two screens of projection on the walls; in one of the tem the dancers' bodies are being captured by one cameraman in real-time, while on the other excerpts of archival dance footage from Iran are being seen. A narration recites brief portions of history that illustrate how dance has been suppressed. Wrinkling the papers, the dancers get close to the center while others cut the wrinkled papers to the size of a book, labeling and numbering the pages. The paper fence becomes tighter and tighter until the dancers' bodies are completely covered and they are no longer able to dance. The videos turn into white noise. Those who were cutting the book paginated it on the spot and inserted it

between covers. On the cover is written "*The History of ~~Silencing~~ Dance*" written by Alireza Keymanesh. They put the book on a stand to be exhibited and sold as an artist book.