

# Dance (Lens) 2025 — The Camera Behaves

Curator Siobhan Murphy asks the films' directors about their relationship to the camera.

**Albert Rask (Netherlands)**

— *My name is the sound I use to introduce myself* (2023)

**Andreas Guzman (Hong Kong)**

— *Monday* (2025)

**Tizia Benmchich-Lanardonne (France)**

— *Contresens* (2024)

**Jordy Dik (Netherlands)**

— *A Bird Named Mansour* (2024)

**Anna Kekkonen (Finland)**

— *Noora* (2023)



# **Dance (Lens) 2025 — The Camera Behaves**

Curated by Siobhan Murphy

**7:30pm, Thursday 10 July 2025**

How does the camera support the story-world of the dance? Curated by Siobhan Murphy, 'The Camera Behaves' gathers recent international films in which the camera is a key agent. From tense single takes to the complicity of direct address and the visceral rollercoaster of a dancer's point of view, the diversity of camerawork in these films invites you to examine this crucial aspect of screendance craft.

Presented at **DANCEHOUSE D**



## 1) How do you usually go about developing a camera approach for a new film?

**Tizia:** When I write, my eyes are the camera. I visualise the shots according to what the characters are feeling. I always try to ask myself whether the camera should be close or distant, whether it should embrace their emotions or, on the contrary, create a kind of distance. And if I'm filming dance, I immediately imagine the camera in the choreography: it becomes a body in motion, a dance partner.

**Albert:** After the rough sketching of a film, I start developing the characters in the film. Usually I see the camera as a character itself, and as I imagine who the acted characters in the film are – what they think, and how they behave – I do the same for the camera. Whether the camera ends up shy, intruding, passive, observing, threatening, personified, or forgotten about depends on what the scene and performers need in order to live in the film and not simply end up as performers performing in front of a camera. Often it becomes a question of tension.

**Andreas:** What usually dictates the camera approach is the theme or emotion that I'm trying to convey in the film. Dance films are seldom about traditional narrative. They tend to be about an emotion, a feeling, that is then abstracted. So, once I know the emotion that we are going for then I start to think about camera techniques that best convey that specific emotion.

**Anna:** In the film Noora, I interviewed Noora a lot before filming and was very aware of what she was capable of and what she liked. Because of her disability, Osteogenesis Imperfecta (brittle bone disease), it was also necessary to find unique ways for filming and to plan it carefully. We had also talked a lot about filming locations together. During the scriptwriting process, I already relied a lot on the film's visual side. So later in the process it was easy to imagine what the film would look like. Although I carefully planned the possible shots and made a storyboard, I also left plenty of room for changes on location if a plan doesn't work. Careful planning and flexibility worked well on the shooting site.

**Jordy:** First of all, it's useful to know that A Bird Named Mansour was my very first real dance film, both as a director/choreographer and as a DOP. It was quite a large project too, created in collaboration with a renowned company, so I decided not to throw all my stage-based choreographic instincts overboard. Instead, I chose to stay close to my foundations. I began by choreographing the piece and positioning myself with the camera inside the rehearsals every day. Each session, I tried out different camera movements, angles, and visual approaches. When something worked, I would repeat it the next day and continue refining, adding new elements to the sections that still felt unresolved. In that sense, I wasn't just choreographing the dancers, I was also choreographing myself as a camera operator within the work. This approach came quite naturally, because intuition lies at the heart of my choreographic practice.

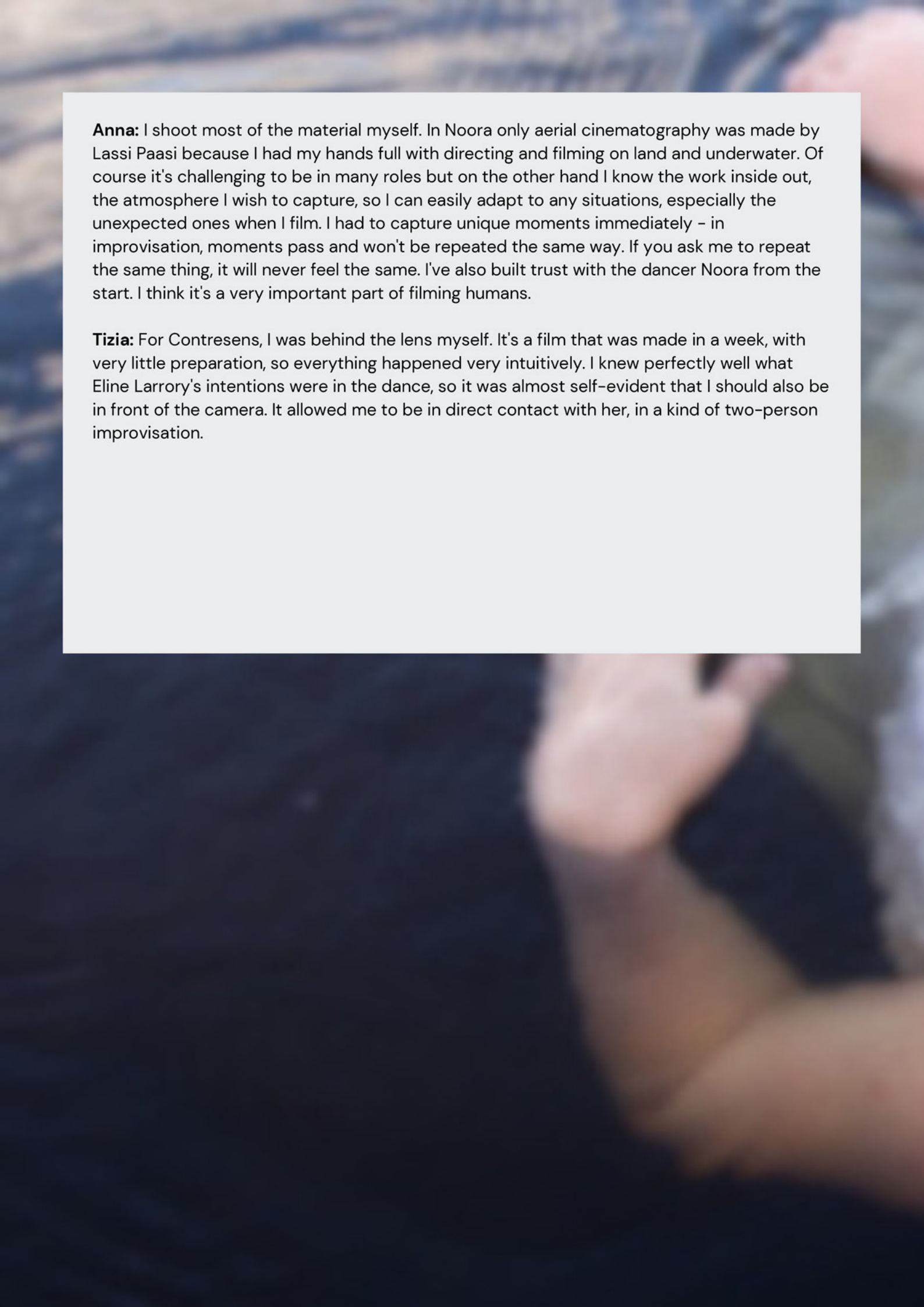


## 2) Do you work with a DOP or are you behind the lens yourself?

**Andreas:** That depends on time and resources available, but in the past few years I have now been working with a DOP. I would rather focus on the directing side more and leave the camera to someone who is more specialized than myself. This also makes the work richer as it is about collaboration and teamwork. I see film as a collaborative effort that demands a lot of coordination from different areas and this is the challenge and the beauty of it at the same time.

**Albert:** I am often operating the camera myself. I own a camera that I know well and my productions are so low budget, that I often cannot afford a DOP. I do really like when I have the option to work with a DOP. Working with a DOP gives me so much more headspace to direct, and filming is such a beautiful process when it is collaborative. But humans are also humans, and I still remember the very first DOP that I worked with. We didn't click and he didn't allow me to experiment with the camera and lenses. I like to imagine and plan things in the pre-production, but the beautiful things always tend to happen on set when everything has become physical, tactile and you can touch and play with them. On the film *My name is the sound* I use to introduce myself, I had a DOP. I knew exactly how I wanted the scene to look and feel like, but I couldn't imagine it. The script was a poem and the aim was a one take. I had spent a day on set with my own camera but couldn't get things to work out. I read the "script"/poem to the DOP who just said "I know exactly what you mean". I have never had such a great synergy on set as that day, and the film is the first take out of two.

**Jordy:** For this film, I was behind the lens myself, although that wasn't the original plan. The cinematographer I usually work with had to pull out just a few weeks before the shoot due to burnout. Getting the opportunity to collaborate with Shechter II from the renowned Hofesh Shechter Company doesn't happen every day, and I wasn't willing to let it go. So I took the leap and decided to step in myself. I already had some experience creating short portraits and documentaries, so I embraced the challenge. And what a ride it was to create the choreography, film it, and edit the entire piece on my own. It felt incredibly rich. I now see the process of making a dance film as a layered creation. First comes the concept, the title, and the casting. Then the choreographic phase. Then the act of dancing with the camera. And finally, shaping the edit. All these layers together contribute to a kind of depth in the work that I've completely fallen in love with. Honestly, I hadn't felt this much like a dancer in years, not since I became a choreographer eight years ago. But with a camera in my hands, there I was again, dancing in London.



**Anna:** I shoot most of the material myself. In Noora only aerial cinematography was made by Lassi Paasi because I had my hands full with directing and filming on land and underwater. Of course it's challenging to be in many roles but on the other hand I know the work inside out, the atmosphere I wish to capture, so I can easily adapt to any situations, especially the unexpected ones when I film. I had to capture unique moments immediately – in improvisation, moments pass and won't be repeated the same way. If you ask me to repeat the same thing, it will never feel the same. I've also built trust with the dancer Noora from the start. I think it's a very important part of filming humans.

**Tizia:** For Contresens, I was behind the lens myself. It's a film that was made in a week, with very little preparation, so everything happened very intuitively. I knew perfectly well what Eline Larrory's intentions were in the dance, so it was almost self-evident that I should also be in front of the camera. It allowed me to be in direct contact with her, in a kind of two-person improvisation.



### 3) Was there anything in particular you sought to do with the camerawork in this film?

**Tizia:** The camera in *Contresens* is as free as the protagonist. It doesn't follow perfect or smooth movements: it sways, it vibrates, it lives. It's almost as if it's dancing with Eline. I wanted her to be organic, instinctive, inhabited. The camera contributes to the breath of the film.

**Jordy:** Because I knew the movement material so intimately, I wanted to stay physically close to the dancers with the camera, to really move with them, and to take risks. The opening scene is actually a one-take shot, something I was determined to try. I wanted to preserve a sense of immediacy and reality and to follow "the baby," an object passed from dancer to dancer, in one continuous journey. It was a challenge, especially with the limited time we had to film, but it was also incredibly rewarding. Throughout the shoot, I tried to trust my instincts and follow my own creative rhythm. The team around me sometimes wanted to record more options or coverage, but I felt strongly about keeping the process light and alive, much like the choreographic process itself, which took place in just seven days with dancers I had only just met. That same urgency and freedom felt essential to the camera work. I didn't want to lock myself into a checklist. I wanted to remain in the flow. There are already many things I would do differently in my second film, both artistically and in terms of production. But I'm proud that I stepped into this as a first-time filmmaker and stayed close to my artistic core. That's something I really want to hold on to, even as I continue to grow in the technical and theoretical aspects of filmmaking. For me, dancing is one of the few art forms that allows a human being to be completely free, to fly across the earth. That's the sensation I want to recreate when I dance with the camera.

**Andreas:** Our film *Monday* is about the fast-paced nature of the work environment in major cities and how chaotic and draining it can be if we don't check-in with ourselves. In the framing and editing, I looked for angles or ways of cutting that emphasized that idea. Whether it be playing with frame rates, speed ramps or repetition in editing, these are all elements I used in order to transmit this kind of frenetic energy. When the character breaks from the daily routine, I went for a less jarring or harsh approach. The scene on the beach is about a sort of raw release and flow, so I tried my best to have the cinematography reflect that and keep that visual language for when the main character goes back to the real world.

**Albert:** I wanted the camera to be a dancer itself. I wanted the dancers to be close together and to “mask” the set slightly with the depth of field to feel even more intimate with the performers. I wanted the lens to be as “natural” as possible. Only one of the performers is a professional actor. The rest are non-actors. Because they were non-actors, I was afraid to be too close to them with the camera. The compromise ended up on a slightly telescopic lens to get some distance from the performers but to still be surrounded by them so that the camera could dance along.

**Anna:** Camerawork played a big role and that's why I also wanted to do it myself. My background is in cinematography, more specifically underwater cinematography. For me, movement has been a very important part of it. Especially in water, it's important to move with the environment, waves, tides and other water movement. You don't get good results fighting the water. Actually that was the way I learned to love filming underwater. It is going with the flow of water, kind of dance with the environment where you are in a strong interaction with the environment. I have noticed that this way the viewers experience the work more intensively also with their bodies. In the film Noora, I thought of the water as another person, Noora's dance partner. I strive for the camera movement to follow and interact with her movements both underwater and on land, capturing the viewer to the experience.





## 4) Do you have any general thoughts about camerawork in screendance?

**Jordy:** To me, the camera has to dance in screendance. When choreography and camera move together like partners in a tango, that's when the magic begins. I'm especially drawn to choreography on film that holds on to a sense of theatricality, that doesn't get swallowed up by effects or digital abstraction. I love when a piece builds a real bridge between stage and screen, rather than relying on cinematic tricks or visual illusions. That's where I find the most emotional and poetic resonance.

**Albert:** I think there are many cool tricks, both in filming and editing. Sometimes too many. I really appreciate a camera that doesn't try to be "cool" but who has its own character and who gives space and time for the dancers or performers to actually dance and perform. In the end I believe the camera should serve the film, and most films have their own logic to be served. I also really enjoy a bold camera that dares to position itself instead of just "running after the action". And film is an optical illusion. There are so many amazing live dance performances. So, I also love when screendance makes use of the directed point of view the live dance pieces don't have control over.

**Anna:** It's a very interesting form of cinematography. In addition to its visual side, I find it very physical. As a cinematographer, it's like you're dancing with the dancer, interacting with their movements. In that way, it's also a very physical and intuitive form.

**Andreas:** Dance is such a visual art form that it lends itself immensely to the art of film. Some of the best work I've seen in terms of screendance is when both dance and film are dancing with each other. In a way, the camera operator has to dance with the performer as well. Furthermore, visual aesthetics can be more easily achieved in screendance, but an overall cohesiveness of a work that blends both dance and film is what I find challenging every time.

**Tizia:** For me, the camera has a central role in screendance. It has to be an integral part of the choreography, like a performer in its own right. It accompanies each movement, it feels the dance so that the spectator can feel it too. Otherwise, it becomes a simple recording. What I'm looking for is that "magic" where the image becomes movement, and movement becomes emotion.





## **My name is the sound I use to introduce myself (2023)** by Albert Rask [Netherlands]

A group of young men seeks closeness and human contact in an intimate cross between a dance and a fight.

*My name is the sound I use to introduce myself*, is a reflection on the absurdity of the mundane rules we not only choose to follow but as well force to force to follow. As waiting for the light to turn from red to green on the cross-path. By waiting, you as well ask others to wait. The concept of the film was born while babysitting a child of a friend. In the role as the adult I found myself enforcing rules I had been fighting against even before I had developed a verbal language. My position as the adult shocked me. Clearly knowing my ideals I regardless acted against them. I thought to myself that growing up was like a dance you couldn't escape, and I am still searching for the footsteps that will free me from following the moves I am expected to do.

*Created with the support of Tungsten Studio*

**Director and Choreographer** Albert Rask  
**DOP** Christiaan Compaan



## **Noora (2023)**

by Anna Kekkonen [Finland]

*Noora* is a dance short film that follows Noora's movement. She is a dancer. Her body's impulses are generated in the moment from contact with different environments. Noora has congenital bone fragility, Osteogenesis Imperfecta. She uses a wheelchair as a dancing aid and in it, she can move widely, but feels isolated from the surrounding environment. She is searching ways to move, focusing on possibilities rather than on limitations. On the ground, she feels the ground against her skin. In the water she can let go of her wheelchair. Noora's toes sink into the mud bottom, which pulsates with her steps. The water supports her fragile body with its pressure and surrounded by it she dares to move more freely, her body is more elastic, her expressions and range of motion are greater.

*Film has been funded by: The Finnish Cultural Foundation, Arts Promotion Centre, Finland & VISEK, Finland*

**Director** Anna Kekkonen





## Monday (2025)

by Andreas Guzman [Hong Kong]

Nobody loves Mondays. The return to the grind haunts every office worker worldwide. Paperwork piles up, conference calls overload, and the suits and ties bind us to the monotony of the workday. But even within the overbearing nature of Monday, the everyday working person can find their escape from the corporate work culture and discover their inner peace.

*This project was produced by the Hong Kong Ballet's Creative Media Studio*

**Director** Andreas Guzman

**Choreography** Ruochen Wang

**Director of Photography** Silas Chow

**Editor** Justin Ho

**Dancers** Ruochen Wang, Jessica Burrows, Jingyi Feng, Larissa Li, Jonathan Spigner, Lin Chang-Yuan Kyle, Basil James



## **Contresens (2024)**

by Tizia Benmchich-Lanardonne [France]

From a Parisian Métro platform below to the night streets above, one woman decides to go against the current in *Contresens*. Her defiance bubbles up through expressive facial contortions that build to a freewheeling dance motivated from deep within. As her confidence grows, she discovers the sheer pleasure of each movement, coming fully alive in her body through the catharsis of dance.

**Written, directed, edited** Tizia Benmchich-Lanardonne

**Dancer** Eline Larrory

**Music** Brianna Tam





## **A Bird Named Mansour (2024)**

by Jordy Dik [Netherlands]

*A Bird Named Mansour* is grounded in the unsettling reality of today's world—a world filled with chaos, where countless children are forced to flee their homes in search of safety. It directly reflects on the choices of world leaders who too often opt for violence instead of saving lives, a harsh commentary on our current global landscape. Inspired by birds—symbols of freedom and the yearning to fly towards a peaceful future—the film speaks to the simple yet profound desire to live together in harmony. At its core, *A Bird Named Mansour* serves as both a mirror to our times and a call for change, reminding us that none of us can truly be free until freedom belongs to all. So, what are we waiting for?

*A Bird Named Mansour* resulted from a 10-day research program in which choreographer Jordy Dik collaborated with Shechter II (UK) and Compagnie Tiuri (NL) as part of the 2024 Fast Forward program by the Performing Arts Fund NL

**Artistic director, DOP & edit** Jordy Dik

**Associate artistic director** Loura Sita van Krimpen

**Composer** Vincent Dankelman

**Dancers** Holly Brennan, Timur Dam, Damien de Hoog, Margriet Jacobs, Yun-Chi Mai, Igor Memic, Eloy Cojal Mestre, Matthea Lara Pedersen, Sabine Van Riel, Piers Sanders, Rowan van Sen, Gaetano Signorelli & Toon Theunissen

# DANCE (LENS)

