

Editors Notes: 1: This is a spell.¹ 2: My Therapist reminds me continuously that to feel safe in an environment one must feel that they know it. If at any point you feel lost in this application, I invite you to take a moment to allow your eyes to wander over it, to remind yourself of the contours of my words and my thoughts. Take this time to know my environment, to feel safe in it. It is a dangerous place to be, the mind of another.

Trans Rites

KOREOGRAFI-LABORATORIET 2026

What if we take seriously the proposition that change is real? ... that all things are swirls of energy, vortexes of moving forces, currents in an ever-changing sea. What if we take seriously the idea that [the] God[dess] is change? - Jeremy Gilbert, Starhawk, and Octavia Butler.

Trans Rites could one day have been a work of ritual magic performed by trans-artist Skjære (formerly Oliver Sale) and an as yet to be determined number of fledgling occultists. It would be a spell of speculation and transformation, built on the ancient magics of Ursula K. Le Guin's *The Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction*², and Nancy Stark Smith's *The Underscore*³, as well as more contemporary philosophies such as the Anarcho-Buddhist conceptions of the Sangha⁴ and the western mystical tradition's Egregore⁵. The spell uses these frameworks to explore the rite-of-passage, drawing on the inherent tensions between transgender politics and the traditionally hegemonic roles of social rites, and would be activated and uncentered through the overlapping spaces of constant transition, performance as ritual, and unconventional scripture as performative tool.

Were it to exist, Trans Rites would be a direct response to the situations of KOREOGRAFI-LABORATORIET 2026, which itself exists as a semi-rite-of-passage for dance makers in Norway. As one of the few accessible platforms for young performance artists, and with a specific rejection of established / returning choreographers, KOREOGRAFI-LABORATORIET naturally becomes a communal meeting point for the young milieu of Oslo to be welcomed by their peers into the field. The performance would respond to KOREOGRAFI-LABORATORIET's reality by becoming an uncertain rite-of-passage for the dance maker, who is both established and unestablished in the Norwegian context.⁶

¹ Camilla Brogaard

² You know this one, the one everyone at KHiO goes ham over. Guess what, I also go ham over it, Le Guin's work is the continuous container of my theoretical knowledge, the touch stone of my mind. She, and her work, are the place that grows bigger every time I enter. She does not lead the way, but she makes the way easier to go.

³ NSS's *The Underscore* is both a score made and a score found. Developed by Smith in collaboration with other Contact Improvisation artists, the underscore aims to reveal the ways we meet and dance together in a jam. In the work of Berlin-based artist, Peter Plyer, *The Underscore* has become a tool used to create safe spaces for queer performers and participants through the extension of the scores opening as a way to develop spatial curiosity and structural trust.

⁴ Translation: Community of Spiritual People, considered by the Buddha to be one of the necessities for the journey towards enlightenment.

⁵ From the Greek "wakeful", meaning a collective energy or spirit, usually the embodiment of a transformational group.

⁶ Skjære is a British migrant to Norway. Having lived in Norway for 5 years, in Innlandet, Oslo, and Østfold, they are both known and unknown in the scene. Their work has been tested on smaller stages, and they are beginning to establish themselves as an artist with a specific voice and position. At the same

In being a rite-of-passage, the work would be given a directionality, something to move into, a before and after temporality. It is the nature of rites-of-passage to delineate in their happenings a shift in social or personal place, traditionally one of becoming part of a/the group. This form gives skeleton to the potential performative experience, one in which the performer moves from the fledgling occultists into the space, performs / experiences the rite-of-passage, and then returns to the fledgling occultists changed.

At the same time, the performance would be pulled by a trans rejection of the patriarchal and individualist ideas of personal transformation and directionality. Here, the artist could define transness as a form of homecoming, where home is, as Le Guin puts it, “a place you have never been”⁷. In this way, the trans politics of the artist would reject a simple linear directionality in favour of a forward-moving return, something explicitly in tension with itself and therefore able to avoid any notions of finality in which the patriarchal rite might indulge.

You: This is all well and good, but what does the work actually look like?

Me: It's a good question. And it is one I am dubious to answer for fear of trapping myself in my own applications.⁸ In general, I enjoy creating art that is space-responsive. With this work, I want the whole thing to be understood as part of the experience: space, audience, performer, technician.

You: Speaking of tech, what about the technical requirements?

Me: Honestly I'm pretty easy. In my head now I imagined hanging sheets of paper or fabric from the walls with the symbols of the underscore marked on them, as a kind of guide to the work. This is a flexible idea. I also like the idea of lights that wave slightly, like in the performance *Dancing* by Deborah Hay (who is also part inspiration in this work, and in my life), and was in the house not so long ago.

You: And the audience, sorry, fledgling occultists? Where are they in all this?

Me: So some will be sat around the edge of the room, for sure. But I enjoy voluntary participation, so at least 8-10 will be asked before the show if they are willing to participate in some way. An earlier version of this experiment centred the occultists in the space as a sort of “inner circle” for the transformation, but I would also like to find other participatory configurations to explore.

You: (Optional) Your work honestly sounds philosophically rigorous and politically timely. We would love to have you cast your spell at Dansens Hus in 2026.

(Optionally Optional) *Also omg maybe we should just give you a co-production and also also we spoke to the people at kulturrådet and they loved your arbeidsstipend so we said fuck it, first ever house-choreographer at dansens hus please?*

time, they are still new here, their Norwegian is young, and their situation in the scene is decidedly “emerging”.

⁷ The Dispossessed.

⁸ This mirrors in me a broader concern about the academic as trap, application as finality. In writing about the work do we foreclose its possibilities or open it up conceptually and practically to new ways of being?