

# GRANER

CREATION CENTRE

LIVING ARCHIVE OF DANCE

A SPACE FOR MEETING, LISTENING AND TRANSMISSION

2025-2028

Sonia Fernández Lage



# GRANER: A SPACE FOR THE FUTURE

In the last 3 years El Graner has placed the practice of dance at the heart of the development of its project, implementing a series of structural and strategic changes to achieve this goal. Based on the experience and learning of recent years, a new period must focus on four key questions:

## **What is Graner?**

A public creation centre, a facility managed by Mercat de les Flors as part of the city's network of Art Factories and a space for the professional sector and other communities.

## **What is it like?**

An old light bulb factory converted into a municipal space with various uses, including professionally equipped dance studios, relaxation areas, and common areas.

## **Where is it?**

In the Marina de Port district, a suburb with diverse communities and a strong network of associations but lacking professional cultural facilities.

## **Who is based there?**

The centre is managed by a core team of four people, a team within Mercat de les Flors, various collaborators, and an artistic and civic community in constant transformation.

Understanding this framework is essential for undertaking this coordination project with a mature, unique, and distinctive Graner. It defines the path for management, partnerships, and the lines of support for all the creations that take place there.

Given the current situation of El Graner, this project outlines two missions that will guide the entire facility's activities over the next four years:

- 1. Graner as a space for meeting and transmission:** a centre of convergence and dialogue, where a diversity of perspectives on the body and dance come together. A space for dancing, raising questions, engaging in critical reflection, and exchanging knowledge. A relational, creative and human space.
- 2. Graner as a living archive of dance:** with a thirteen-year history, it is responsible for creating strategies to showcase and make accessible the poetics and practices that have passed through the centre. Envisioning El Graner as a living archive of dance enables the creation of new interpretations in the future while preserving the knowledge accumulated within its physical and conceptual space.

These two missions, as the guiding thread of El Graner and its programmes, help solidify its role as a hub for transmission, research, and artistic creation. I see the coordination of this organisation as an ongoing process of fluid interaction, open to the practices and individuals it engages with. With this idea of a Graner that thrives and evolves based on values of affection, care, relationships, and dialogue, I aim to highlight how dance and the performing arts promote inclusion and community, making the centre an accessible and welcoming project-home.

- Teamwork must be at the heart of El Graner, weaving together the concept of management in the same way that a dance piece is created, from a participatory and collaborative perspective. El Graner is conceived as a network of intersections, a molecular system with a dynamic core that adjusts management goals and brings attention to often invisible realities.
- As a network hub, El Graner must transform partnerships with other organisations into a tool for fostering support for creation. Mobility, both local and international, understood as the knowledge and recognition of different realities and working methods, should serve as a mechanism for creating networks, transferring knowledge, and providing opportunities for the artistic community.

## OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

As a starting point, four cross-cutting objectives have been established for the next four-year cycle:

1. Develop El Graner as a centre for experimentation, reflection and archiving of dance.
2. Solidify El Graner's long-term structure and define its governance model in collaboration with managing institutions and organisations.
3. Implement programmes to support creation, transmission, and mobility, with a particular emphasis on residencies.
4. Contribute to the development of a network of creation centres in Catalonia.

Below is an outline of the main strategies of the project:

### **Management:**

- Facilitate discussion to define the governance and identity of El Graner.
- Consolidate the team, stabilise the communications position, define the upcoming artistic coordinator role, and design a sustainable organisational structure.
- Expand funding, primarily through discussions with the Generalitat.
- Connect the project with the Sants-Montjuïc district.
- Work in a cross-cutting manner based on principles of listening and dialogue.
- Develop a protocol to address violence and harassment

### **Support for creation:**

- Modularise the residency programme, expand exchange residencies and develop a programme at the regional level of Catalonia.
- Strengthen artistic support to enhance the visibility abroad of residency practices and expand the value chain of projects.
- Provide access to various artistic communities that work with the body as a research tool, enriching choreographic research from multiple perspectives.
- Promote research in stage design by exploring the possibilities offered by rehearsal spaces.
- Invite artists to participate in professional gatherings, conferences and meetings.
- Generate a network of partnerships that promote the transfer of knowledge of artistic practices into various exhibition frameworks, educational action, territorial initiatives, and intellectual discussions.

**Transmission:**

- Implement the programme of transmission laboratories with an openness towards different methodologies for exploring the body and the performing arts: diverse choreographic languages, dramaturgy, sound, and lighting.
- Design a training programme for the body, incorporating unique approaches.
- Open up diverse spaces for artistic practice in El Graner, to facilitate encounters between different communities and generations.

**Theory, archiving and documentation::**

- Publish a series of journals on choreographic theory and creation methodologies.
- Establish connections with academic and professional institutions in the field of theory.
- Consolidate the Diving Groups programme as a space for theoretical and practical research.
- Partnerships and Internationalisation:
- Strengthen existing links between institutions, facilities, festivals and fairs and open new ones.
- Contribute to the development of a network of performing art creation centres at the regional and national levels of Catalonia and Spain.
- Expand the scope of internationalisation beyond neighbouring regions.

**Alianzas e Internacionalización:**

- Strengthen existing relationships between institutions, facilities, festivals, and fairs, while establishing new ones..
- Participate in the development of a network of performing arts creation centers at the Catalonia and Spain level.
- Expand the scope of internationalization beyond neighboring territories.

**Territory and Education:**

- Position Graner as an inclusive and accessible dance centre for both the city and the local neighbourhood.
- Revitalise the Marina district by drawing audiences to this suburb.
- Design concrete actions with the residents of La Marina.
- Open up El Graner as an educational centre that integrates dance mediation into classroom settings.
- Foster long-term, meaningful relationships with communities.

## RESIDENCIES

Residencies and artistic support are the core tools of El Graner, shaping both the content and form of the centre's day to day. The backbone of its raw material are artistic internships. As a mechanism rich in potential, complexity and vulnerability, residencies need tailored and extensive support to effectively serve as a driver of collective growth and a catalyst for collaboration and mobility.

El Graner must continue to develop the range of residency types that have emerged and been established in recent years

- **Public Call\_ 6 types:** associate, creation, research, research in performance space, practical methodologies, emerging.
- **Mercat de les Flors\_** in partnership with Dance House.
- **Networked\_** projects hosted in collaboration with festivals, fairs and creation centres.
- **Exchanges\_** exchange residencies with various regions (Catalonia, Spain, International).
- **Barcelona Crea\_** research and mediation processes in art factories.

Graner provides artistic and technical support primarily for projects selected through the public call, focusing on their development over a specified period. However, support for a broader artistic community in the city needs to be strengthened, while also establishing medium-term support models. It is essential to build bridges with the suburban artistic sector and mobilise resources to create opportunities for access to the facility..

Graner must continue to try out new residency models that can address the diverse needs of creative processes and established partnerships. This implies extending the notion of residency beyond the traditional artistic framework, investigating the possibility of applying it to other communities, such as education or local communities, as well as promoting research spaces in stage design. This expansion can open up new opportunities for collaboration and interdisciplinary dialogue, enriching the impact of artistic practices.

Moreover, the facility should open up to other cultural professionals in order to promote ongoing training and the exchange of knowledge among various cultural agents.

## PARTNERSHIPS

El Graner is an interconnected platform that fosters cooperation and collaboration in the world of dance and the artistic sector. Through a network of residencies and dialogues, new forms of relationships are created while establishing connections between agents at various territorial levels. The development of collaborative projects implies the decentralisation of discourse and embracing alternative ways of thinking and acting, moving away from competition and towards a concept of partnership.

Through this multisystemic network, the exchange of knowledge, collective thinking, and the development of best practices should be promoted, creating a positive impact both on the artistic community inside and outside the facility, as well as on the El Graner team, which is in a permanent state of training.

Under the current governance model, within the network of Art Factories and under the umbrella of Mercat de les Flors, the partnerships that El Graner aims to continue activating and expanding for the new period are:

## **CITY**

- **Local partnerships:** Montjuïc Castle, La Model, MACBA, Mies Van der Rohe pavilion, Museu de la Música, Auditori, Institut del Teatre, Postgraduate Programme in Stage Design and Digital Technology.
- **Links with festivals:** Grec, Moujuïc, Viu Montjuïc, Dansa Metropolitana, Pensa!.

## **CATALONIA:**

- Working group with various regional centres to develop a mobility programme among creation centres.
- Exchange residencies within Catalonia.
- Partnerships with strategic markets and festivals: FiraTárrega, Fira Mediterrània, TNT

## **SPAIN:**

- Regional partnerships: La Granja (Valencia), Laboratorio de Artes Vivas (Tenerife), Colectivo RPM (Galicia), ProLabs (Valladolid), Festival Escena Patrimonio (Spain), Centro de Cultura Contemporánea (Madrid), Dansa Valencia.
- Discussions to initiate: Réplika Teatro (Madrid), Dantzagunea (Basque Country), EIMA (Mallorca).
- Discussions on establishing a national network of creation centres.

## **INTERNATIONALISATION:**

- Internationalisation through exchange residencies, public calls and Mercat de les Flors programmes.
- Partnerships with La Briqueterie (FR), CAMPUS (PT), Santarcangelo Festival (IT), MAP (BEL).
- PLATAFORMA project with creative centres in South America, Portugal and Spain. Space for research and collective thought on artistic residencies.
- Discussions with Santiago Off, NAVE and GAM (CHILE), and desire to initiate dialogue with Brazil.
- Discussions to participate in the PEERS (Platform for European Emerging Research Spaces) project.

# LOCAL CONTEXTS

Graner must operate with principles of transparency and accessibility to continue building partnerships both locally and city-wide. The educational programme is also vital to bring the practice of body movement and dance closer to the community. During the next term of office, as mentioned in the section on residencies, there is a plan to explore the concept of expanded residencies for additional groups in order to build stronger connections with various communities. It is essential to highlight mediation as a key component of the project, offering a broad and varied perspective on the neighbourhood, educational communities, and artistic practices, and encouraging innovative support strategies for creation.

Actions to engage with the local community and educational centres:

**Neighbourhood:**

- Consolidate the paradigm shift in community creation to focus on the experience through movement. El Graner as a dance space for residents, families, teachers, children, young people, amateurs and professionals.
- Revitalise a suburb with a city-level professional facility.
- Build a network with local associations to enhance interactions with other users and work from the perspective of the local area as a cultural and educational agent.
- Participate in the programming sessions of the Sala Maremar, to increase the presence of dance in local neighbourhood exhibition contexts.
- Encourage dialogue with facilities and civic centres to develop strategic lines of interaction.
- Generate a specific programme for young and old people

**Education:**

- Continue integrating artistic practice within primary and secondary school classrooms.
- Provide ongoing training spaces with experts to exchange methodologies between artists and teachers, and create a platform for collective reflection.
- Host professional meetings between artists involved in educational research in order to exchange views, questions and proposals.
- Promote artistic experiences at El Graner and seek ways to connect the Marina neighbourhood centres with Mercat de les Flors.
- Facilitate the presence of schools and their communities in the El Graner programme to put dance at the centre of educational activities as a resource for intergenerational learning.
- Publish a piece exploring the question: El Graner, a centre for creation, artistic practice, and education
- How does a creation centre connect with pedagogical practice? This publication will gather and contextualise the experiences of artists, teachers, students, and mediators in this field.

## IDENTITY

Graner was founded in 2011 as a research and creation centre for dance in Barcelona. With the aim of being a public centre for the city's professional sector, it was integrated into Barcelona City Council's Art Factories programme, managed by Mercat de les Flors and in collaboration with the APDC and the ACPDC. Since its foundation, El Graner adapted its identity in response to changes in public policies, the management of the Mercat de les Flors and the transformation of the professional dance sector. Now, it is necessary to open a new dialogue that aligns El Graner with the urban landscape in which it is integrated today.

Until now, El Graner has operated under a framework of collaboration between Mercat de les Flors and the Barcelona Institute of Culture (ICUB), a complex arrangement in certain circumstances that has also opened opportunities for artistic research and choreographic

production, as well as for citizen participation in the cultural sphere. The joint work of El Graner with Mercat de les Flors has fostered a space of interaction that has enhanced both the professional sector and the community. Despite having some common objectives, El Graner, as a creation centre, has its own distinct and unique missions. This coexistence, while maintaining autonomy and collaboration, makes support for research and knowledge generation about the languages of the body unique and valuable, capturing the diversity of current poetic realities..

Within the Art Factories Network, El Graner represents a unique management model that offers a distinct perspective on artistic experimentation and the support of workspaces for artists and cultural professionals. El Graner's role within this network enhances the possibilities for supporting creation, fosters exchange within the city's cultural sector, and diversifies and mobilises artistic communities. Furthermore, it emphasises, in comparison to the other factories, the significance of choreographic practice and the role of dance within public management.

To implement a management model that reinforces El Graner's identity and supports the future development of the facility, it is essential to review its governance structure. Through a cross-disciplinary, in-depth, and long-term dialogue, Mercat de les Flors, the ICUB, the sector, and El Graner must redefine and develop specific strategies for cooperation, measurement protocols, management agreements, or other legal frameworks that ensure the sustainability and evolution of El Graner as a centre for research and theory. Clearly, there is a complex mission that has been central to the El Graner project since its beginning and now needs to be addressed by all the institutions involved.

Extending the current coordination model for an additional four years would allow us to approach this critical juncture with a thorough understanding, facilitating the creation of a more sustainable Graner in relation to its environment. It is essential to reassess the current model to ensure the long-term sustainability of El Graner and to preserve its role as a space for excellence, experimentation, risk, and reflection on choreographic languages. Drawing on my extensive experience in the dance sector and my understanding of El Graner's current situation, I am ready to support a dialogue that will help shape Graner into the premier centre for dance creation in Barcelona.

---