

International Theatre Institute ITI

World Organization for the Performing Arts



Message for International Dance Day 2026 – 29 April

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Choreographer

English (original)

International Dance Day Message 2026 by Crystal PITE, Canada

Humans move - our arms reach out, our knees collapse, our heads nod, our chests cave in, our backs arch, we jump, we shrug, we clench our fists, we pick each other up and push each other away. This is language as much as it is action. This is what the body has to say about need, defeat, courage, despair, desire, joy, ambivalence, frustration, love. These images flash with meaning in the mind because we have felt these things so purely in the body - we have been moved.

We are dancers, all of us. Life moves us; life *dances* us. Ephemeral as breath, concrete as bone, a dance is made of us. We sculpt space. We write with our bodies in a wordless language that is deeply understood. We grace the space within and around us when we dance.

Like life, a dance creates and destroys itself in every moment. Like love, it is beyond reason.

I like to think of the body as a *location*; a place where being is held and shaped. When we dance, we are profoundly engaged in being there.

I'm writing this in early 2026, when there seems to be no end to the oppression, upheaval and suffering in our world. Daily, as we witness the horror of what humans are capable of doing to each other and the machinery of power that funds and fuels unspeakable violence to people and planet, dance feels like a facile, useless response. It's hard to imagine what a dance artist can do in a world that so badly needs radical change and healing.

And yet - art, like hope, is a form of love. Defiantly generative in the face of desecration, art is a solvent for the calcifying mind and a balm to heal it. Art is a vessel to hold us while we grapple with questions - together - in a way that is different from news, different from documentary and education, different from opinion and social media, different from activism and protest, but not incompatible.

Through creativity, we accumulate resistance and hope through small acts of courage, curiosity, kindness and collaboration. In dance, and in dance-making, we find proof that humanity is more than our latest heartbreaking global failure.

But dance needs no justification, no explanation. It's made of us yet owes us nothing. It only needs to inhabit a willing body. From that location, it can translate the ineffable; acting as an intermediary between us and the unknown.

We are moved by these vanishing traces of beauty in the present moment. And as we embody both the dance and its disappearance, we are reminded of our impermanence. At the same time, if we are paying attention, dance will give us an occasional glimpse of the soul.