

# Identity Pending...

## Semi-finalist

Emily Noton  
Body, Movement, Culture Group  
Doctorate program  
Image location: Edmonton



## Image Description

My socio-cultural research on women and ballet draws from Michel Foucault's post-structuralist theories about power, identity and the self. I examine the experiences and opportunities that women have to continue dancing past the age of 18, as they navigate the often fraught transition to adulthood from their adolescent ballet training selves. In Foucauldian theory, the self is constantly changing and recuperating in relation to context; there is no one "true self". As I think about my research participants, I ask what happens to them when they finish their training programs at age 18, but still wish to continue dancing as an adult? How do they remodel and transform their selves in response to societal pressures to either be a ballerina or leave dancing behind entirely?

This image was captured during a session where adult ballet dancers were experimenting freely; this one drew me in due to its speculative nature. She has chosen not to show her face, and although she is wearing a classical ballet leotard, her hair is loose and free and her arms are not in a classical ballet position. Her identity is neither classical ballerina, nor is it a non-dancer, it is pending.

## Image Creation

This image was captured in a session where several dancers who I teach were moving freely in front of the camera. We were in outdoor locations around downtown Edmonton using natural light and a Canon EOS 5D Mark II. Myself and the dancers were able to depict themselves according to how we felt most comfortable. From the large image bank created during this session I selected this picture. I have consent from the woman in the photo to use this image, as well as all other participants of the session.