



DANCEHOUSE DIARY

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- Mobile Minds -



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DANCEHOUSE IS

dancehouse is the
centre for independent
dance in melbourne.
through its programs
of residencies,
performance, training
and research,
dancehouse is a
space for developing
challenging,
invigorating, and
socially engaged
moving art.
dancehouse aims at
being a genuine
tool for the dance-
maker, a catalyst
for developing new
audiences, and a
facilitator of
meaningful alliances
and mobility schemes,
in australia and
internationally.

EDITORIAL

thinking bodies, moving minds

Here we are! Voilà! The first issue of what we hope to be a long series of Dancehouse Diaries. So, what is this journal about?

Dancehouse Diary is an attempt to take you on an intimate journey though dance as art of movement. Every three months, we will bring you news about the artists who work at Dancehouse. We will each time outline a topic, closely or loosely connected to our programs and, since dance is also the art of moving though other arts and fields, we will invite guests with various backgrounds to contribute. In a way, we let the most ephemeral of art forms occupy the blank page and those who are inspired by its movements, to share their thoughts with us. We want to create the space where not only bodies move, but the minds as well. We wish to circulate some brain-food that interrogates how dancing bodies can tell us about the world we live in and how they can inspire us to move more meaningfully within our inner or outer spaces.

But why would you read it, especially if you are not a dance maker or not even merely a dance lover?

This year, Dancehouse (you know, that unassuming Victorian building situated in Carlton North, in between busy Lygon and chic Rathdowne) has not only stepped into a new year but into its 20th year. Initially an artist-born and an artist-led initiative, Dancehouse is still here, 20 years after, the house and heart of many independent dance projects.

Some would say it's great work and for some others, it would go understandably unnoticed. And still, very few venues in the world dedicated to contemporary dance can boast such a long life. These past 20 years mean that Dancehouse has been the space where dance artists have worked, grown their ideas into shows, and have sent out their messages to audiences and the wider world. It means that for 20 years, industrious artists and generous stakeholders have invested funds, energy, time and trust into this adventure. It also means that people out there genuinely believe in the power of the moving body to convey meaning.

The great Merce Cunningham said that one really had to love dance as it gives nothing back in exchange (no poems to be printed, no paintings to be hung on the wall) just that single fleeting moment when you feel alive. With its more lasting pages, this Diary attempts to anticipate or prolong that moment. It is also a modest tribute to all the dance makers who, as Hervé Guibert – a French dance-spellbound journalist very nicely put it – dance in order to save our gestures and movements from death. Last but not least, it is a reflection on the artist's power to be a social sculptor, as Beuys believed, through movement, action and thought, thus inspiring us to live more creatively.

And so, now that we have worlds at our fingertips, scores of friends in our computers but such cramped spaces in our hearts, this Diary is that of those people who can sculpt our inner architectures, and maintain our body and mind alert, mobile, alive...

Will you read it now?

Angela Conquet, Artistic Director of Dancehouse

Angela Conquet is the newly appointed artistic director of Dancehouse. She comes to Melbourne after 6 years of working for the independent dance sector in a multi-arts center in Paris. She believes indeed, that we must dance, otherwise we are lost...



mobile minds

by jana perková

at home in travel

Distinguishing between travellers and mere tourists is the great sport of our time, one that even travel anthropology will occasionally participate in. The tourist experience is inauthentic, mass-produced, second-hand, tame. They spoil places and experiences with their very presence. Every self-respected travel writer has raged against them. Jan Morris writes: "I spend half my life travelling, and mass tourism pursues me wherever I go." Tourists, like hell, are always other people. One is having a meaningful solitary experience of, say, a waterfall or a trattoria, when here they come, with their smartphones, Lonely Planets, bum bags. A decade into GPS for everyone, people mourn that one cannot get lost any longer, escape the civilization.

Early history of post-medieval European travel is tied to exploration. Since most European knowledge of the world was incorrect, a noble 17th-century 'virtuoso' could gain a lot in social relevance by simply producing a travel account that relied on experiential knowledge, rather than hearsay. Their travel diaries, illustrations, and accounts were praised as belonging to 'experimental philosophy'; travel as method. Soon many travel guides carried appended blank, pre-formed questionnaires and tables for recording relevant information still missing from the embryonic statistics collected: the traveller's attention was directed to the destination's climate, minerals, soil, population, clothing, livestock and agricultural product.

As the tables filled, one could gradually command less respect simply for observing that not all of Genoa was constructed in marble. The amateur scientists' fact race was now caricatured as, in the words of Ralph Waldo Emerson, "counting the cats of Zanzibar." Left without a socially useful purpose, the amateur explorer has had to settle on collecting adventures, aesthetic experiences, sights of beauty; waterfalls and trattorias. No longer a scientist, the traveller became an aesthete: the philosopher, the writer, the artist. The race continued by other means.





sons and diamonds

In our contemporary understanding, there is hardly any pursuit more individualistic than good, proper travel. We travel to get out of our community; to see and learn new things; to adopt new faiths, modes of dress, ways of life; to fall exogamously in love; to eat, pray and find ourselves. We travel to make ourselves different from people like us – to become who we really are, in isolation from the distracting influence of our own, boring, bourgeois society.

Our travelling romanticism is heir to 19th-century Romanticism; even more specifically, to the French. We are heirs to Delacroix, Flaubert, Rimbaud, and then Gide – men who went to the exotic Orient to find their soul, stifled in the hopelessly small-minded, bourgeois towns of the French provinces. In 1832, Delacroix set off for Tangiers, to capture the exotic North Africa in his painting. Within three months, he wore local dress and was signing himself off in the letters to his brother as ‘your African’.

Flaubert bore a lifelong hatred for his native Rouen; for the entire France, indeed. Returning from a holiday in Corsica as a schoolboy, he wrote: “I’m disgusted to be back in this damned country where one sees the sun in the sky about as often as a diamond in a pig’s arse. I don’t give a shit for Normandy and la belle France... I think I must have been transplanted by the winds to this land of mud; surely I was born elsewhere.” After finishing law school (terrified the whole time that his life would turn out to be “like everyone else’s: monotonous, sensible, stupid”), his father died, enabling Flaubert to travel to Egypt. Flaubert immediately proceeded to study its language and history, admire its women, camels and temples, and proclaim himself Egyptian at heart.

Here is the precursor to every book penned by every woman who found love and happiness in the hills of Tuscany/islands of Greece/arrondissements of Paris; but also to the desert trips of the Beatniks, the Asian pilgrimages of the hippies, and the European escapes of many a young Australian who just does not feel at home where home is. Travel now was not merely an experience of newness: it was ecstatic, chaotic, intense, soul-probing, enlightening, it was returning home via plunging into total strangeness, it was Rimbaud’s systematic and calculated total deregulation of all senses. Travel now not only inspires art, and develops a boy into an artist – the experience of travel is understood as akin to the experience of art: to travel is to see the world made strange.

Arthur Rimbaud thus became the prophet of every avant-garde and art movement that had pretences to transform lives: admired by Patti Smith and Bob Dylan, quoted by punks and surrealists alike. When I decided to move to Australia at the grand old age of 20, I didn’t think of myself as doing something recklessly stupid; I thought of myself as heroic and self-discovering, and the image of Rimbaud was very much in my mind. When a young Melbourne artist told me, over a dinner on a makeshift Brunswick rooftop: “I need to get away from here. I want to experience weird shit,” whether or not he knew it, Rimbaud was on his mind, too.

unheroic travel

Herein lies the paradox: I was finding myself in his country, but he thought he could only find himself in mine. I found it annoying: not so much the idea of cultural exchange, as the implication that he had to go alone, that my hospitality would have been a hindrance to his exploration of a land he needed to perceive as unknown, strange.

In one hilarious chapter in *The Art of Travel*, Alain de Botton visits Madrid with the intent of exploring its charms. But woe!, whatever he sets his eyes on, his travel guide has already comprehensively mapped. Every church, staircase and window frame is already dated, measured, and its architectural or historical importance assessed. The most beautiful convent in Spain, the guide judges pre-emptively. There is no room for de Botton's subjective appraisal. Whenever he momentarily lays eyes on something the guide has no entry on, he feels like his aesthetic enjoyment is of some B-league artefact.

Yes, we are haunted by the ghosts of romantic explorers. The more low-costs flights and budget hostels there are, the more of us mingle through tropical temples and island ruins, the harder it is to find that elusive original, 'authentic' experience. The frequent traveller easily becomes a disgruntled, ungenerous one, like Jan Morris, wanting to publicise her own discoveries, but not wanting anyone else to feel compelled to experience them for themselves. Itineraries become checklists, and checklists competitions. Listen to travellers' conversations, and you will find them often rather aggressive ('Have you done Berlin?' 'Ooh, I was there for a month!' 'I lived there for ten, in a squat.' And so on).

But travel is not all heroic. Most of it is very banal. In my childhood, the most common form of travel was shopping in Italy. Entire Yugoslav families crossed the border to buy branded jeans, American records, cheap pasta and canned tomatoes, metres of stacked plastic chairs for the family restaurants, discount shoes. On the way back, one could see, for kilometres on end, rows of cars parked on the road round the corner from the border crossing: people installed car radios, changed into new clothes, and did everything possible to minimise the visible purchases they would have to declare at the customs. Tourism it wasn't: it was pure, banal, hard-nosed travel.

Most international contact was historically established by people looking for things to buy and sell, including their own work. Nowadays, Filipina maids go to the US; Vietnamese bakers to Australia; Australian artists to Europe. We travel to see bands, art shows, theatre, to flower fairs, for sex. This is the bulk of modern travel: utilitarian, collective, social. Ryszard Kapucinski laments this 'international riffraff', but it is precisely the kind unlikely to succumb to aristocratic, de Bottonian anxieties about travelling right. They are too busy. And while we shop, bake bread, teach dance, absorb too many artworks in an afternoon, we are conversing with another country, without pretending to be the lone explorer in a wild, uncharted territory.

travelling socially

Bearing eyewitness became the primary purpose of travel when Northern Europeans stopped trusting the Catholics to furnish their own stories. Until then, travel involved not so much eyes, as ears. In the 16th century, European elites travelled to discourse: to learn a language, get educated, to obtain access to foreign courts, converse gracefully with eminent men, to "go a hundred miles out of one's way to speak with a wise man", and, not least, speak eloquently upon return. Before travel became colonial stocktaking, it was a discursive, dialogical activity. Instead of chasing waterfalls and trattorias, we could do well to remember that, while we travel, we do not so much romantically escape all societies, as become bridges between many.

Bruce Chatwin, in his beautiful book *The Songlines*, finally furnished me with a satisfying philosophy of travel. "Could it be", he wondered, "that our need for distraction, our mania for the new, was, in essence, an instinctive migratory urge akin to that of birds in autumn?" Chatwin suggested that our urge to travel is the body memory of 200,000 years of nomadism. He used the Aboriginal songlines as the model: the pendular movement back and forth, revising known territory, encountering the world in perpetual motion, always different yet familiar, not so much escaping our community as participating in it by moving together.

I like Chatwin's theory, because it cuts through the elitist anxieties of those who want travel only for themselves, because it justifies our need for distraction and excitement (even of the tourist kind), because it nonetheless honours our need to find things the same on our return, because it socialises travel as a communal activity, and because it seems to describe so well everything that is beautiful about going and returning. It allows that Vietnamese bakers enjoy travel as much as English aristocrats on a Grand Tour. It solves Flaubert's problem of having to be at home where home is not, by positing that home is not a single place.

When we get bored of a place, it is not because we are cursed. It is because we might be at home only in travel.

Jana Perkovic writes about performance, dance, spaces and cities, for a whole host of publications - but it all eventually ends up on her blog, www.guerrillasemiotics.com.

We have asked a few well-travelled Melbourne-based dance artists (Luke George, Tim Darbyshire, James Welsby, Becky Hilton) and some others, who live in between two countries (Perrine Valli, Ros Crisp, Jochen Roller) to tell us why they travel when they travel and how these trips impact upon their work. Here are a few, very intimate entries to our diary...

diary entries



james welsby

Identity is a key aspect of being an artist. Whichever way an artist introduces him/herself, context is quickly clarified: where he is based, in what way he/she works, and where he/she studied or trained. This sense of history and influence (or rebellion) helps shape the artist's present identity. When an artist chooses to travel, that artist has to make introductions more often than at home and must evaluate the "who I was" to express the "who I am." Unfamiliar geography, languages, new people, culture, etiquette, anonymity etc. are identity challenges the traveller must face. With these challenges come new insights and prompt the traveller to consider a future state of identity, the "who can I become?"

I travel to escape stagnation. Perhaps it's a natural instinct, or perhaps a product of circumstance, but I travel often. The value in travelling is a shiny newness of geography, and the thrill of the less familiar, unfamiliar, or the undiscovered. I enjoy a balance of travelling to multicultural hubs for insight into global climates, as well as authentic, isolated, cultural experiences, where one can really explore uniqueness. Travelling carries the hope of you encountering another, but underneath it all, it is an encounter with yourself in a new context that you are faced with.

My ambitions as an artist involve pushing myself into unfamiliar territory, so travelling is essential to my creative practice. By seeing as many performances as possible while overseas, I aim to identify what was successful or unsuccessful about those performances and apply that to my understanding of stagecraft, though this is sometimes very hard to do. I think the translation of travel and new insight filters into the creative process subconsciously, but retention of those insights needs to be nurtured (writing down experiences or analysing them in conversation). During the embodying process, a delicate area between imitation and investigation arises and should be dealt with wisely. Challenging yourself can be hard, but becoming inspired by a person, company, community, or entire continent can help stoke the fires of motivation and encourage more art creation in general.

Last year, I spent four months travelling through Europe and to New York City on a professional development tour. It was the trip of a lifetime for me, as I was able to see many shows, attend numerous classes and workshops, and participate in a residency where I aimed to implement new ideas in a solo. I constantly considered whether I could live in each city I travelled to, and the answer was usually yes. The reason I return to Melbourne to create work is because of my established networks and efficiency in the creative process. People define my roots, not places, and I would like to spend time working with the right people in new places. My mother once said to me that pot plants have roots, yet they can be moved at any time.

The hills really are alive in Salzburg, but let's talk about cultural landscapes. I was very inspired by the independent artistic communities in Berlin and New York City. In Berlin, I got a very strong sense that people made work because it's part of their practice and because they have something to share with the world. They seemed far less concerned with grant writing and grant waiting, and more concerned with regularly working on pieces of performance. The sooner you work on something, the sooner you have a chance to develop it, so my approach now is to apply for grants, but to keep working while you wait. In New York City I was very impressed with the versatility of the dancers. I met someone who had just come off a world tour of West Side Story, was working on a solo theatre project, and was just about to join Lucinda Childs Dance Company. This kind of versatility really opens doors for employment, and I would encourage independent artists to consider if allied industries might suit them as well.

ros crisp

The move from Sydney to Paris happened gradually between 2003 and 2005. The break was finally made in 2005 when I let go of the Omeo Dance studio in Sydney that I had set up in 1997. Omeo Dance studio was the fifth studio I had either run or had permanent access to. My dancing body was inextricably linked to its walls, floor and pillars! With this break, life on the road began. Luckily Carolyn Carlson invited me to become an associate of her Atelier de Paris, which has since been a sort of home for my dancing in Europe. What is in the foreground of my dance interests continues to shift. Time and an ongoing practice bring their rewards. Many artists seek to work with me, now, as I travel throughout France and the rest of Europe performing and teaching.

Learning the language and especially the cultural mores in France has taken years. One never becomes French. And anyway perhaps my 'growing up in the bush' roots are too deep to dig out. I need to return to the bush every year to fill up on the nature and the solitude that I grew up in and which is my dreaming space. On the other hand, my production values have soared since making work in France, as one producer once said to me, 'you can't just walk out on stage and start dancing. We, French, need a cadre, a framework, so we know where to situate you.' It's complex and challenging to be oneself in a foreign country. My partner and I are gypsies, and I think this keeps confronting me with the ephemeral reality, not just of performance, but of life.

Perhaps the most fundamental shift that I have noticed since establishing myself in Europe is the sense of being valued as an artist. This is, no doubt, also connected to growing older and becoming unconcerned with 'trying to make it' or gain recognition. But it is my experience that woven into the fabric of French culture is a gentle, fine acknowledgement, without question, of artistic endeavour. On returning to Australia I am always struck by the hollow space that most artists I know, carry inside them, a kind of bereft loss of value, deep down. It erodes the spirit. I only become aware of this now when I return to Australia. My own hollow space must have grown over...

MOBILE MINDS DIARY ENTRIES



tim darbyshire

Travel is always an encounter with both self and other. At its most extreme no one knows anything of you and you know nothing of others. There is no choice but to invent, explore and discover.

I would like to think that moving through unfamiliar spaces would consequently transform my body into some kind of bizarre receptive conductor between movement and space. Realistically though, most spaces have similar guidelines: left, right, up, down, stairs, concrete, doors, windows, buses, tubes, cars and people. We've been here before.

Flying however, does significantly affect my body. I usually fall into a trance of morbid silence, squeezing things with my hands (often my own hand), my breath is thick and feels like a leaking gas-bottle, my body jolts sporadically, I have piercing pain shoot through my eardrums, my face burns red, I am sweaty and strapped to a chair... It's brilliant.

Natural landscapes are unavoidably inspiring. One of my most memorable encounters with nature was on a trip to some snowy mountains a few hours drive from Oslo in Norway. I went with a small group of artists and friends. This was my first attempt at snow boarding. It was the end of winter, so there was hardly anyone else there. We spent hours swooping through space. I loved the sound of the board carving, the surprise of the body falling through white. I have never felt freedom quite like that. I don't have any photos.

As artists, we need to be in touch with the world. This does not mean we need to be neutral-journalists who report back exactly what happened. But I think it's important to act as a witness across culture and experience, then to subvert or somehow change the focus of the report.

I have been lucky enough to combine travel with work and creativity. I have had travel scholarships through Ian Potter Cultural Trust, Victoria University and some European institutions. These opportunities have led to projects and continued education in Austria, France, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Belgium. As Australian artists, it is fundamental to have these opportunities in place and to increase mobility where possible. We have a unique perspective from underneath: we can feel isolated and alone, yet we have the space to create unique conditions. I feel it is important to continually refresh this perspective by looking both out and in.

jochen roller

To be travelling as an artist falls into three categories for me. Firstly, travelling in terms of touring means constructing a temporary blueprint of my art. As I re-act to the reactions of my audience abroad, another identity of my art emerges. On this blueprint, my art may look accidentally more French or less British – once I am back home, it's hard to find any traces of that look. Secondly, travelling in terms of a creative residency means to interweave my home patterns with the patterns of the new place. Sometimes this results in the patterns getting awkwardly entangled, sometimes they form a sophisticated design. Chances are 50:50, I find. And lastly, travelling as an artist without wearing my „I am an artist“ – T-shirt is a main source of inspiration, as I can let go of my artistic concerns – thus being immensely artistic.

I remember teaching in Moscow in a small studio for over 50 students. There was no space to properly move, most students didn't speak any English and I banged into a giant bust of Lenin every time I demonstrated a movement. In Costa Rica, we had to stop rehearsing when it started raining because the studio had no roof, as the school didn't have any money for it. And in Beirut, we had to break because of missiles being fired. It still amazes me how dancers are persisting everywhere in the world to pursue their passion. It's fucking awesome.

My roots are more perceptible to me when I am abroad. I never feel that German when I am in Germany. But abroad, I deeply feel my roots; it sounds pretty hippie but I can really feel them physically. I wouldn't say that my roots tell me where I belong though. But they tell me where I come from. This information is not very nourishing for artistic growth somewhere else, I find. For that reason, I try not to think about my roots as much as I can when I am abroad. If I manage, I can actually grow.

perrine ulli

I always travel to see, to discover. I never travel with the need for introspection. On the contrary, I go away with the intention to open myself to others, to other cultures, to other people, to other ways of thinking, of living one's life, of feeling things... But almost each time, this natural and unplanned approach has an impact on myself. After a while, I become aware that this or that trip has changed something in me, as during that given time, I had to question my own approach on things, I had to approve or disapprove of my difference, I have surprised myself, I have realized that almost everything is subjective...

Apart from my trip to Japan which was a very strong experience and led me to create a new piece on the Japanese culture called 'Deproduction', my trips don't impact directly on my work. They have an impact though on my way of thinking which ultimately translates into my work. I don't think that travelling is a condition to being creative. It is just an extra food for thought, a source of inspiration or a mere holiday time necessary to the body and the mind. There are as many inspiration sources as there are artists. It can be a country, a culture but also the past, the present, books, a particular arts community, one's native village, one's family, one's experience, one's loves.

During trips the body is naturally the first receiver of these spatial and time changes, including jetlag or weather changes for instance. Besides these expected impacts there is the flavour of an unknown dish, unknown scents, unknown landscapes, unknown noises our body rejects or not – therefore, I would say each trip pushes our body to navigate towards a sort of loss. Loss of usual references. To me, the biggest shock is to travel to a country where I don't understand the language at all. Our both body and mind are lost, and this is where the corporeal adventure starts.

luke george

I've been working as a dance artist for 12 years. There has only been one year in that time, when I didn't leave Melbourne for work. That was probably the weirdest, most disorientating year ever, and I promised myself never to let that happen again. Working and being creative has a sense of movement for me. It's not necessarily about needing to go somewhere else, it's more about generating energy and a constant refocusing of perspective. Not stagnating or freezing over. Sometimes it feels like the act of travelling is about going outwards, but then, when I'm away, I am sometimes more isolated than when I am at home, so it becomes about going inwards. And vice-versa, when I return. In a constant in-out experience that you are either self-directing or it's happening to you.

More and more I realise that I'm attracted to the unknown. The rawness of directing my body forward into spaces and experiences that are uncharted for myself. Actually I think I'm in danger of becoming addicted to it: to discovering, inviting and embodying how and who I am in each new moment; to saying yes to almost everything; to the rush of it; to the spacious expansiveness of it; to its simplicity and purity and messiness and the accumulation. I imagine my body as a modern day explorer. My senses are heightened, my synapses are on fire and I'm noticing more. Noticing the newness of my environment, of the other bodies in it and how I am with these bodies. I am dancing in a studio with bodies from this new place. My body and my mind are convening with them through dancing, thinking and seeing. Without trying to make anything happen, my body/mind is experiencing and learning something new.

Regarding landscapes, one extreme is where the arts are a necessary part of life. Audiences are strong and money flows into it from many directions. The feelings, ideas and dialogues that come from creating, participating in and experiencing art is as valuable as any experience or way of seeing or being in the world and an essential part of life and our evolving culture. Where in the production of work, it starts with the artist – supporting that both through specific production of their ideas or the ongoing sustained evolution of their practice and development. Where the art work is at the centre of curatorial and funding decisions, not deals/partnerships/social/political/trade agendas. Where an artist can take as long as the work needs to take to be created. Where artists can have confidence, pride and a sense of value in what they do. Where the individual artist is as valuable as the company or organisation.



The other extreme is where this is almost the opposite. Where the practice and pursuit of the artist is considered a past time, where only the fine artists of extraordinary talent and training are worthy of focusing their time on a career in their art form. Where contemporary artists have multiple jobs to live and they fund their own work. Where they exist through intensely supportive networks of other artists, audiences and venues. Where they put on a show and make 50 bucks. Where their name on an arts email listing means they've made it somewhere worth putting on their bio. Where dancers keep going and don't retire after a golden-peak-age of 35 and open a school or become choreographers. Where people are making art because they must.

I'm not going to be specific, but out of the places I've spent time, it could be the difference between many different places in the world. And it's always changing. Of course, the first option is the more ideal. But then some of the best work I've experienced has come out of struggle. Kill the romantic in me!

There is some local and international financial investment there for Australian artists to travel. I've been very lucky that my travel has either been paid for by the company I'm working with or through a local travel grant or (in many cases) through the frequent flyer miles I'd accumulated. But then, I've also noticed that the countries I've been travelling to for work are the ones that Australia also happens to have political and trade interests with, and that makes me feel like a bit of a PLAYAAA. And that feels kinda dirty. Australians travel. Even if they can see the world on google earth and man vs wild, they have to see it for themselves and put their bodies in that tangible, sensorial situation. The mother-country celebrates us flying away, but we must come back – hopefully more experienced, ready to start a family and build our economy and be as successful in life as we can be. So... in a way everything points in the direction of "GO! But please come back, and bring some of it back with you and make our country even better". It's still a symptom of the lucky country era, that our country also wants to be a playaaa. I'm not sure about wearing those kind of expectations, but I am completely nourished by accessing the wider world. Regardless of the outcomes of my international activity; by getting out into the world, putting myself into new experiences, meeting people, meeting artists and witnessing their lives and work in action, I'm challenging what I think I know and I'm being inspired to continue to be an artist and make some more work.

becky hilton occupy dancing

I've been away from Australia a lot lately, travelling to new and familiar places. I've been talking with artist friends and colleagues for a book I'm working on. It's about dance and dancing and the questions that swarm around dance and dancing. Perhaps dancing itself staves off questions and as we get older and we dance less, the questions surround us, engulf us. Maybe the experience, the act of dancing is constantly capturing and releasing questions, constantly changing, re-phrasing, re-asking questions; questions that don't need answering until the dancing is receding and there's a big empty space where that 'doing of dancing' once was.

Maybe the intangibility, the 'untranslatability' of the doing of dancing, plays host to our illiteracy, our inability to be articulate about it. It's a paradox, a challenge - how can a linear, black and white, permanent thing illuminate an animated, ephemeral, corporeal thing?

So, I'm slowly working on a word project that investigates this meeting of things, of ways, of cultures, of countries. Writing is like visiting another country for me and dancing is like home. When you're away, home seems so clear, so simple, so revealed.

I'm realizing that my intellectual, physical and social habits are utterly formed and informed and re-formed by my dancing life. I'm dependent on external structures with hard deadlines to generate anything; my ethical desire to not dictate but to instead let things emerge (which works very well in my big group performance work with teenagers) makes a word project unwieldy, unfocused; I'm deeply and incontrovertibly socially constructed and need an exchange or experience with another human being in order to generate any kind of idea at all.

Mainly I've learned this: that the text I'm generating needs to be somehow about what actually happens along the way from idea to product. Too often writings about dance are descriptions of the dance product or investigations of the concept or discussions about the collaborative relationships with other art forms. Instead, I want to try to illuminate the way we do it and somewhere in there is information about why we need it.

Dance shimmers and slips between many things; representation, abstraction, narrative, metaphor, realness, pretending and never completely lands or stays any one place for long. Inherently optimistic, dance forms new communities every time a practice weaves through a process and produces a performance. Our very tangible activities lead to often intangible experiences; the obscureness, ephemerality, 'unviableness' (as Tere O'Connor would put it) of dance make the doing of it political; an act of resistance, a necessary and hopeful act in an increasingly divided and materialistic world.

Occupy Dancing.

And try to write about it.

MOBILE MINDS
DIARY ENTRIES

The full version of our diary entries is available on the [dancehouse website](http://dancehouse.com.au) dancehouse.com.au

dance for the time being

dance for the time being
Open Process
2 – 4 March
from 5pm – 8pm
(come anytime, stay as long
as you please)
\$20, \$17
(valid for the season)

Image: Jonathan Sinatra

by russell dumas

dance for the time being is Russell Dumas' continuous development of solos and duets. This work has no beginning and no end. We have asked Russell to write for our Diary what this ongoing process is about. Also, we absolutely loved the way Deborah Jowitt reviewed this 'maverick and visionary' of Australian dance in the *Village Voice* a while ago.

"*dance for the time being* is a choreographic text or pathway that the dancer must follow, yet like a river flowing through flood plains, the exact path keeps changing. The channels are constantly eroded by tidal action and the deposits of previous floods. This is the residue of experience and like the Japanese concept of *Sabi*, it is the gift of time. Technically, this is part of the process I call "slow rendering".

This practice of "slow rendering" involves distracting the conscious mind with detailed complex physical activities. In the best scenario, the mind abdicates control over how these tasks are achieved within the body and the body unconsciously utilizes the deeply efficient pattern of running. As trust and confidence in this body wisdom increases, development occurs "behind your back". And so the dancer matures as an artist.

The constantly evolving choreographic material in *dance for the time being* is developed to explore the intimate relationship between practice and performance. Outside of the milieu of ballet, professional dance in the West has not understood this necessity for frequent performance experience or the need to support the agency of the dancer as a performing artist.

The work is concerned with development of dance as a discreet art form. I seek to develop dance as an art form sustained only by movement practice rather than by relationship to other more established art forms. The work is elaborated in a pragmatic aesthetics of sustainability – a necessary incursion. It is the antithesis of politically fashionable, curatorially driven, eco- friendly greed.

I take the expressivity of all bodies as a given. It is this expressivity that gives us culture. I'm not so much concerned with the "how" and "what" questions of the body concerning expressivity as to "why". Why is the body expressive?

The 'dancing body' is a palimpsest. As each layer is erased, it leaves traces, which constitute a provenance. This work is an attempt to make a community of individuals who constitute both audience and participants: a temporary collective – a community for the time being" – *Russell Dumas*



by deborah jowitt

"This is beautiful work—simple, yet complex; highly imaginative; profoundly physical; sensuous without being overtly erotic. You feel the choreography as a warm current of motion that the dancers are guiding through their bodies. The prevalent dynamic is deliberate, with occasional surprising little eruptions. The five performers (...) look relaxed and unperturbed, as if they were concentrating on demanding, yet pleasurable tasks; occasionally, one of them smiles. When they've finished one passage, they walk to another spot and begin a different one. Seldom have I been as aware of feet and how they press into, rebound from, or test the floor. One person causes another—lying on his or her side—to turn by walking in a close circle, hooking each step under the partner's ankle. Two people rolling head to toe may be holding each other's feet against their faces.

The five begin by walking into the performance space and executing a passage in unison, but all of them seldom dance together over the course of the evening. The two men perform a duet, while the women, in a line on the floor, do a slow, meditative, sitting-lying dance. In all the duets, partners mold their bodies together and touch each other in unusual, oddly intimate ways with what comes across as tenderness. (...). Moves like this may sound tricky (and they are), but the calm clarity with which they're performed make them look as unaffected as breathing, and every recovery from a manoeuvre is unhurried, smooth, and resilient. This makes an accent as small as the quick flip of someone's hand or a sudden run or the deliberate stamp of a foot against the floor seem startling. (...) I almost hoped the five superb dancers would keep going until the night had fully fallen, and we'd all be together, listening to the darkness."

The *Village Voice*, October 13th 2010 on *dance for the time being*, performed at the Baryshnikov Center (dancers: Jonathan Sinatra, Shugg, Nicole Jenvey, Linda Sastradipradja, and Christine Babinskas).

monster body

PROGRAM
21 – 27 MAY

by atlanta eke

Atlanta Eke will present **MONSTER BODY** at Dancehouse within the Next Wave Festival. Drawing from strong and haunting connections between local and global images that shape female identity in contemporary culture, **MONSTER BODY** exposes the **MONSTER** that lies in the space between the dancer and the audience. Atlanta is sharing here some of the original thoughts that inspired her...

Becoming Monster, as a concept, has been initially inspired by an instruction given to me by choreographer Deborah Hay for the performance of the solo *In The Dark* – “Become Monster without revealing Monster”. I spent many weeks working within Hays’ practice to “become monster” during which I began to research Simone de Beauvoir’s literature on female embodiment “One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman”. I am interested in how de Beauvoir writes about how a woman can never exist; she is always in ‘becoming’, in a continual state of emergence. In the book “*The Second Sex*” de Beauvoir talks about the process of ‘becoming flesh’, which is a time, in a girl’s life, whereby she comes to experience herself as sexual, bodily being, exposed to the ‘gaze’ of others.

I am interested to work with the notion of ‘gaze’ in the context of making and performing *Becoming Monster*. A kind of gaze that is instrumental to the conventional mode of being an audience member in the theatre today, a kind of gaze I would like to manipulate, possibly obliterate, in order to allow for unknown opportunities of being together in the theatre and attempt the formation of new kinds of subjectivity. I have begun to ask myself the following questions:

- » How does the audience ‘gaze’ on my body as performer?
- » Is this a reflection of the objectification of the image of the female body in western capitalist society today?
- » How does society influence me to gaze upon my own body?
- » How can one gaze upon a body that does not exist?
- » Can becoming monster allow for a new kind of gaze upon the body of a female?

My intrigue in the relationship between ‘becoming monster’ and ‘becoming woman’ has led me to read a book titled “*The Invention of Hysteria*”, which very explicitly examines monstrousness expressions in the image of the female body in the context of performance. In this book, Georges Didi-Huberman traces the intimate and reciprocal relationship between the disciplines of psychiatry and photography in the late nineteenth century. Focusing on the immense photographic output of the Salpêtrière hospital, the notorious Parisian asylum for insane and incurable women, Didi-Huberman shows the crucial role played by photography in the invention of the category of hysteria. As Didi-Huberman shows, these photographs were far from simply objective documentation. The subjects were required to portray their hysterical “type”—they performed their own hysteria.



I am interested in making a solo dance performance in response to the images in this book; for the photographs to act as a tool for choreographic development and a means to explore the performativity of documentation and thus, investigate notions of representation. These photographs allowed society to feel safe and protected from the feminine monstrosities. But these female subjects were performing hysteria, becoming monster without revealing monster. These monstrous images of the women as a means for producing choreography is an interesting starting point for investigating the history in the categorisation of female behaviour, in the male dominant discourse of psychoanalysis and how it produces a certain type of body image.

I am interested in working within an uncertain feminism engaged in philosophical and linguistic deconstruction of the phallogocentric structure of language, and therefore, subjectivity. To do this, I will search for where the real monster lies, the oppressed monster, the monster as the essence or emergence of a woman, her ‘becoming’, a materialization of a woman that can only exist outside of existence as we know it, the reality constructed by man.

MONSTER BODY is the shared effort to
Imagine a different future
MONSTER BODY’S incentive is a political imagination
Not political ritual
Or dogma
Or ideology
Imagination is the key to **MONSTER BODY**
An image making
Concretizing
Realising **MONSTER BODY**
As something we don’t yet have a word for
Something we don’t quite know
Imagining is always reimagining
And this is what **MONSTER BODY** is most
The **MONSTER BODY** assumes many faces
And this is what **MONSTER BODY** is most
The **MONSTER BODY** assumes many faces

Monster Body
21–27 May
8pm & 4pm on 27th
NEXT WAVE FESTIVAL

atlantaeke.blogspot.com

Image: Tim Birnie

WEAVE MOVEMENT THEATRE will be presenting *Done to Perfection*, a new piece incorporating dance, physical theatre, dialogue, fantastical characters and an original music score. We asked its Artistic Director, Janice Florence, a few questions about their work in general and the place for the disabled body in particular.

Done to Perfection
April 12 – 14 / 8 pm & April
15 / 3 pm - \$15, \$10
[www.
weavemovementtheatre.
com.au](http://www.weavemovementtheatre.com.au)

done to perfection

What would you say to someone who doesn't know your work at all?

The work of Weave Movement Theatre has evolved over the 14 years of its existence and through the various guest directors and artists we have worked with. We have performers with various disabilities, all experienced performers and also we have performers without disability. We create original work through setting movement and theatre tasks and creating from individual responses and interactions. We work with dance, movement, text and character, all emerge from the performers as raw performance material and are formed by the director. We draw on improvisation techniques, contemporary dance, martial arts, original text, a sense of beauty and a sense of the absurd.

In what way do you think you impact on the way people perceive the moving body?

We question assumptions about dance and who may create dance theatre. Not everyone in the company has a physical disability, but everyone has a characteristic way of approaching movement. I hope people will see the creative possibilities opened up by working with diverse bodies and minds.

Why do you think it is important to encourage people with disabilities to be creative and share their work with the audiences?

For the same reason that it's important for anyone to be creative and show their work to audiences - because they are creative human beings who, in many cases, have performed for years, because they have developed artistic work that is innovative, edgy and pushes boundaries - as all good art should. People with disability are foremost people and like some other people, choose to pursue the performing arts. In recent times, there has been more recognition of this as we emerge from the primitive reactions to disability that have dominated for many centuries.

How would you comment on the space given to the disabled body by our society today?

It is grudgingly given more space than it was traditionally. It is allowed out into public places - when they are accessible. Many spaces are not accessible and so not available. People still react with various stock responses - helpfulness, pity, awkwardness, denial, distance. Some people in our company have other disabilities that are not physical and they experience reactions to the way they speak or think or behave. But definitely more space is given than in recent history. Otherwise, we would not be performing at Dancehouse.

learning curve with rosalind crisp

Rosalind Crisp will be the facilitator for Learning Curve 2012 - a concentrated and intimate studio learning experience for dancers and choreographers. Rosalind will share her continually evolving practice. Her work offers practical tools to pay attention to the act of dancing and offers primary sources for movement that empower the dancer as creative agent.

March 26 – April 5

workshop with rebecca hilton

Everyday Making, Showing, Talking. During this 2-day workshop, participants will generate their own in-house performance series, utilising internal and external resources; improvisational scores, movement manipulation techniques, chance compositions, ready-mades, mash-ups etc. The workshop will aim to generate ideas, create material and formulate structures that may be useful in individual creative practices, in collaborative relationships and in the way we see, talk about and experience each others' work.

April 28 – 29

workshop with prue lang

Choreographic Systems. This workshop will be an introduction to the systems explored by Prue Lang in her own creative practice. After experiencing a number of different approaches to improvisation in her career, from the tactile and instinctive nature of Contact Improvisation to the rigorous and cerebral Forsythe Improvisation Technologies, Prue developed her own approach to creating systems of generating and organizing movement in real-time. These systems are based on what she calls 'physical thinking' - a logic that one becomes familiar with when working with Prue for some time.

During the workshop the dancers will be led step by step through a series of explorations and tasks that are largely based on the principles of connecting thinking, sensing and action. (*Advanced dancers only*).

May 12 – 13

dance film artist in residence – ximena monroy

Mexican dance film artist, curator and festival director will be in residence at Dancehouse during the first half of the year, working with local dancers to create a short dance film derived from a study of dance notation. Local dance artists interested to meet and/or work with Ximena should feel free to contact us for more information. Find out more about Ximena's work on Agite y Sirva, a touring videodance festival, at www.agiteysirva.com

IT'S ALL HAPPENING

independent artist news

» from the dancehouse family tree

One of our previous Artistic Directors, Dianne Reid, now based in Adelaide, will present *Dance Interrogations*, a real-time dance and video event at Medina Grand Adelaide Treasury Tunnels.

March 2-11 www.adelaidefringe.com.au

» we love Melbourne

Tim Darbyshire will premiere his new work *More or Less Concrete* revealing links between movement and (found) sounds as triggers of emotion and memory.

April 18-22 at Arts House www.artshouse.com.au

James Welsby is teaming up with the Melbourne Aquarium to present his self produced new work *From the Tides*.

May 9-12 <http://jameswelsby.com>

Fiona Bryant + Lucy Farmer are making *Hiatus* for the Next Wave Festival. You'll meet at Arts House and be taken on an unexpected journey.

www.nextwave.org.au

» with love from STRUT

Jacob Lehrer is developing a new project through a STRUT SEED residency focusing on 'other and difference' and drawing on Jacob's diverse choreographic and performance experience.

Paea Leach & Jo Pollitt are currently working on *Amplified Beast*, a collaborative writing/dance making project about living, learning, losing & moving.

Claudia Alessi will present her new full length work *In This* at the Studio Underground, State Theatre Centre.

April 18-21 www.strutdance.org.au

» with love from CRITICAL PATH...

Paul Gazzola has been announced as the 2012/13 Associate Artist at Critical Path. He will be working in research blocks including the facilitation of a workshop entitled *The Dancing Body of the Future* March 19-23.

Ghenoa Gela will investigate the intersection between traditional Torres Strait Islander dancing and contemporary movement to create her own unique movement vocabulary. She will be working as resident artist within the Creative Practice Unit at the School of Arts and Media at UNSW.

March 26 - April 19 www.criticalpath.org.au

DON'T MISS OUT!

danza permanente

"New York choreographer DD DORVILLIER will present a performed lecture of her new work, *Danza Permanente*.

Danza Permanente will analyze the score of a Beethoven String Quartet, studying the score horizontally across a single instrument line, as well as vertically in relationship clusters between the four instrument parts, developing strategies for the physical interpretation of pitch, dynamic, and timbre indications. The duration of the piece will be consistent with and determined by the musical score. The distribution of parts to the dancers is by instrument line, each dancer taking the line of a particular instrument. We study not only the sequence and chronology of the musical parts, but their harmonic and thematic relationships across the different movements of the string quartet, and then transpose this information into the movement of bodies through space. We are attempting to make the music visible. Playing within a realm in which there exists no concrete rules to ascertain a certain success or failure in the dancery reproduction of a piece of music, we are exploring ways of transforming our subjective understanding of music, into dance." – DD Dorvillier

simone's boudoir

"I am incapable of conceiving infinity, and yet I do not accept finity." Simone de Beauvoir

In a way, Simone (de Beauvoir, some would have guessed...) has got nothing to do with a boudoir conversation. The boudoir conversations had already moved into the cafés by the time she was having them. In the spirit of the salon, we invite the dance makers and dance lovers alike to engage in discussion (and discourse) by provoking monthly informal topic-centered talks with selected guests. It will be about dance but also the world in general – isn't the contemporary body so viscerally linked to the world we live in? So, boudoir is for the intimacy of it – ideas circulate more freely in a familiar warm environment; Simone is for the sharpness and freedom of ideas. We will aim at a sort of deliciously sophisticated French over-intellectualism but we will mix it with the coolness, irreverence and optimism of the Australian style. Let us reassure you - Simone's Boudoir will be kinky, but only intellectually speaking.

our new green room

We have invited Melbourne illustrator Michael Fikaris to do a revamp of our Green Room (which, for the occasion, will turn colours) and draw it into an informal library, where our users are able to access writings on dance, funding reports and guidelines, dance literature and have access to our DVD library of past produced shows. A permanent DVD Player and TV viewing area will be set up, along with comfortable chairs and desk space to work when accessing our internet connection, offered free to Dancehouse members. We are currently refreshing our dance book and magazines catalogue, so you may like to have a look.

ALSO COMING UP
AT DANCEHOUSE

Danza Permanente
March 9 at 8 PM
(free entry)

Mobile Minds
March 15

Becoming Monster
May 17



Green Room
(opening mid-March)

what artists want

by natalie cursio

So, I'm charged with the job of wrapping up Where It's At - a conversational convergence of independent dance artists who are part of what makes up the eclectic and industrious community inhabiting and orbiting Dancehouse. In case you missed it, we invited the dance community to come along and talk to us in an open and frank discussion about making and practising dance. Initially I thought that writing about this would be a pretty straight-forward task - I would be summing up this open session of consultation with over 40 local dance artists, directors, advocates and educators - creating a kind of wish-list perhaps. But now as I start to wade through the notes taken on the day, it suddenly feels a whole lot more complicated.

OK, so the need for space, time, advocacy and cash are all basic - nothing so complicated there, and they were probably the same needs 20 years ago when Dancehouse was first established. However, the particular angle or frame through which individual artists see these basic needs is where things start to diverge and artists practicing at different points in their careers add further flavour and diversity to this summation. It's not just about what artists want but how they want it.

I have the space to flesh things out just a little by mentioning one interesting point of contention; that is, the question of how much artists should be expected (or expect themselves) to shape their projects and practice by the current, and long-standing climate of minimal funds and minimal producing support available to independent artists. I'm not so much talking about the conceptual ideas artists work with, but the format and logistical vehicles through which they can make things happen, make progress, make dance work.

On one hand, we have the perspective that could be phrased as "There is very little money / there never will be / get on with it / do what you can" considering it more useful to adapt and be creative within what opportunity and infrastructure already exists". On the other hand, we have something like "Where is the money? / we must be fully supported / we cannot sell ourselves short". These artists feel devalued by what they see as 'hoop jumping' and compromise. The increasing demand on artists to know it all (how to market their work: how to target audiences; how to build a 3-year plan for touring a show that hasn't even been made yet) contributes to the high level of wear & tear on energy and confidence. It's worth considering how these changes the way artists approach making work and does it allow less space for risk-taking and genuine discovery through a creative process? Quite possibly, but again there are many perspectives on this.

The most clear and resonant overarching point is that artists need a range of opportunities. They need opportunities in order to maintain momentum and purpose and to continue to grow in what they do. And they need opportunities that have a greater level of 'follow through'. I know I'm not saying anything revolutionary here but it's worth breaking it down to a list - maybe here's a wish-list after all - of things that fall into the category of opportunity and pertain (without being exhaustive) to what dance artists want...

opportunities to:

- » take risks and fail and/or take risks and succeed
- » increase and diversify the life of our dance works
- » be supported by organisations beyond a one off season
- » travel and mobilise our work
- » participate in international and interstate exchange projects
- » share information between artists across Australia - could we develop a platform to do so?
- » increase critical discourse (let's be brave!)
- » gather as a community and cook up new ideas, stir up collective energy
- » gain confidence in talking about our own work (it's clear we firmly believe in the value of the work we do as contemporary artists so now we need to communicate that in our daily lives)
- » support each other, counteract the competitive environment set up by all that grant writing stuff
- » talk about money (let's not deny it's importance!)
- » receive appropriate remuneration for our work
- » discover new avenues for funding, discover new residencies
- » have access to inexpensive or free studio space more often
- » have others advocate for our work and have producers to work with
- » get the support we need to grow as artists (not as entrepreneurs!)
- » have our work shown to larger/broader audiences
- » be matched with organisations/institutions for partnerships (and have those places adapt to the artists needs as opposed to the artist fitting the mould)...

If the slice of dance community in attendance at Where It's At is anything to go by, then it could be concluded that what dance artists DON'T want, is to stop creating dance work. It appears we have a very robust and pro-active dance community whom Dancehouse has an absolutely genuine desire to nurture. There will always be a level of self-organisation and self-reliance that is necessary for artists to survive this industry, but Dancehouse is here to be used as a tool for artists to build their ideas and thrive.

The wish-list above is not only what artists want, it's also what Dancehouse wants for the artists.

Natalie Cursio is the Program Producer at Dancehouse and a practicing independent choreographer and curator.

it takes two to make art work

by cressida bradley

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

The relationship between the artist and their audience is enduring, empowering, transformational and critical as well as loving. And often, all at the same time. But what exactly does an audience contribute to an artist's work? Why do artists engage with their audience? And how do artists know if it's working? But first, why do we make art?

At its best, art has the ability to transform its audience. Change the world? Now that's a good reason to get your creativity out of bed in the morning. Award winning animator Adam Elliot ensures his style of film making is one of gentle persuasion. But still he feels that his role is clear, 'we need storytellers to enlighten and evolve us'. Elliot uses his medium to draw attention to the injustices that enrage him. His feature film, *Mary and Max*, was inspired by his friendship with a pen pal.

Telling a story of a man with Asperger's Syndrome, Max has spent his life being misunderstood. Elliot hopes that audiences leave his film with an informed perspective on the condition and are less quick to judge people like Max.

David Young, Artistic Director at Chamber Made Opera, also believes that art has the ability to change the way that people think. 'When I see that transformation, that's when I get excited', Young confesses. The transformation that he seeks is a heightened perception of reality; where the audience discovers a different way of viewing the world and lifts their thoughts to new horizons. However, change isn't guaranteed. Some consideration is required to ensure the best conditions.

When Angela Conquet, now Artistic Director of Dancehouse, and a choreographer were working with a female soccer team in Parisian commission flats, they first established an environment where trust could flourish. The choreographer immersed herself in the girls' world, socialising and attending soccer training. Through the project, the girls displayed a new strength expressed through an empowered self awareness.

For Conquet, the arts offer a precious space in which ideas, feelings and experiences can be shared. 'It's no longer about individualism... but it's about contributing together to something which will ultimately be a profit for everyone'. Conquet is quick to add that transformation through art is more than abstract theory, but can be made real in artistic practice. There are familiar activities that artists employ to build a connection with their audiences. Talks, forums, articles and interviews provide audiences with the opportunity to see artists and work in a new context. And there are other ways to engage with audiences that also provide artistic and personal satisfaction for both artist and audience.

Chamber Made Opera have been presenting original works in unusual spaces; the living rooms of audience members. The setting is on a human scale. It is domestic, intimate and welcoming. With the artists outside of usual main stage parameters they can take greater artistic risks. There is also time for lively conversation when the artists mingle with the audience after the show. An engaged audience cannot help but have an effect on the artist and their work. For Young, the

audience is an essential ingredient in the art making potion. 'I'm not particularly interested in work that exists in a vacuum. I've written music and scores that sit in boxes, but that's not the work. The work is this kind of vibration of air and bodies in space'. Elliot hears from fans all over the world. 'Very rarely do we get to meet. We're all living in isolation, but through letters and emails we can give each other the confidence, courage and conviction to keep going.' He confesses that, 'I need my audiences as much as they need me'. Elliot is always learning from his audiences' points of view. 'Sometimes these emails are like free therapy', he chuckles.

Anything that develops his skills as a writer and a filmmaker is quickly applied to the next project. Conquet witnesses this kind of exchange revealing new directions for artists' research. Taking the opportunity to talk and work with their audience, the artist has the chance to reflect on and think differently about their work. If audience engagement can be considered significant to an artist's practice, then it is vital to identify when we are successfully connecting with our audience.

Of course, there remains the business of art. Let's be ruthlessly pragmatic; more burns on seats gives permission to make more work. But it would be short sighted to reduce audience engagement merely to a quantitative formula. Success can be defined in other ways. There is the immediate reaction of the audience. Have they been moved? Are they emotional, voluble and thoughtful? Elliot feels that, 'the last thing I would want is for my audience to be apathetic or indifferent. What I need them to be is effected, whether they laugh or cry, or both. I want to push their buttons and I want to provoke a response'.

Young looks for a distinct pattern. 'After the performance and the clapping has stopped, there's a silence and then there's a sudden loud discussion. The proportional relationship between that silence and that volume of discussion is a good indicator of the success and the impact of the work'. Perhaps add a few more points if you have to kick out the audience at the end of the evening. Success should be measured over a long period of time. We should observe and value change that doesn't fit into an acquittal form or on a profit and loss report.

Conquet tells a lovely tale that illustrates the reward of patience and persistence. She was once presented with a farewell gift from a regular audience member. It was a list of the performances that she had programmed. He had attended every single one. Over this period the man had radically changed his life, including changing career to embrace a more creative life. When Young feels that his audiences are engaged, the momentum is felt throughout the organisation. It's seen in the number and calibre of artists who want to work with the organisation, and the ease in which relationships are forged with presenters. The relationship of the artist and the audience is complementary; each one holding the potential to inspire, empower and transform the other. Artists can tap a rich vein of benefits by building a connection with their audiences; the most valuable being the ability to tell a story and see it change the world.

Dancehouse celebrates its 20th anniversary this year
www.dancehouse.com.au

Adam Elliot is in the early phases of a new work
www.adamelliott.com.au

Chamber Made Opera presents a living room opera, *The Box*, 17-24 March
www.chambermadeopera.com

Cressida Bradley is a Director of Exposure. Exposure encourages creativity through its storytelling and creative experiences.
<http://exposuretheblog.wordpress.com>

www.exposure.com.au

This article was first published on ArtsHub.

EVENT CALENDAR

MARCH – MAY 2012

march

March 2 – 4 / 5pm – 8pm	Performance RUSSELL DUMAS /dance for the time being – open process
March 9 / 8pm	Performed lecture DD DORVILLIER / Danza Permanente
March 15 / 5.30pm – 7.30pm	Discussion Simone's Boudoir – Mobile Minds
March 26 – April 5 / 9.30am – 1pm	Intensive workshop Learning Curve with ROS CRISP

april

April 12 – 14 / 8pm & April 15 / 3pm	Performance WEAVE MOVEMENT THEATRE / Done to Perfection
April 28 – 29 / 10am – 1pm / 2pm – 4pm	Workshop Everyday Making, Showing, Talking with BECKY HILTON

may

May 12 – 13 / 10am – 1pm / 2pm – 5pm	Workshop Choreographic Systems with PRUE LANG
May 17 / 5.30pm – 7.30pm	Discussion Simone's Boudoir – Becoming Monster
April 21 – 26 / 8pm & April 27 / 4pm	Performance ATLANTA EKE / Monster Body, with the Next Wave Festival

CONTRIBUTORS TO DANCEHOUSE DIARY

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DANCEHOUSE TEAM

Angela Conquet, Natalie Cursio, Bridget Flood, Gwen Hollberg-Gilchrist, and Albi Care.

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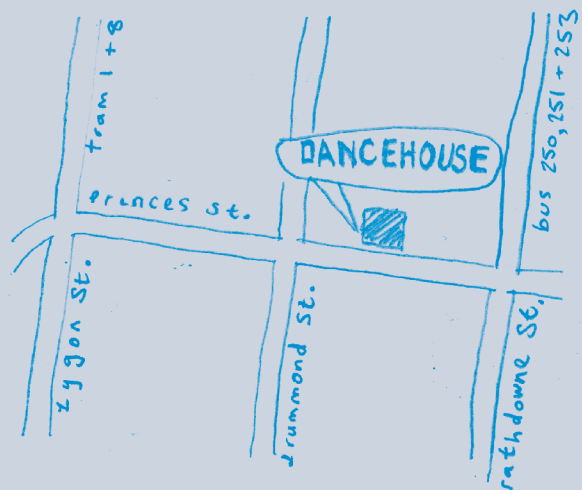
DANCEHOUSE

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Dancehouse is situated on Wurunjeri land. We acknowledge the Wurunjeri people who are the Traditional Custodians of the Land on which Dancehouse sits and pay respect to the Elders both past and present of their Kulin Nation.

LOCATION MAP



melways ref: 2B:44