

Covering letter

Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship Fund

Cai Tomos

Tamalpa Institute California June 18-26. 2011.

PROJECT:

Travelling to The Tamalpa Institute in California to take a workshop with Taira Restar and Anna Halprin.

PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS:

My aim was to experience the work of Anna Halprin and the Tamalpa Institute. The workshop and experience went far beyond my expectations. It was a personally rewarding experience, which has re-invigorated and re-affirmed the direction in which I am going with my dance practice. I have made connections with people from the institute back in the UK and I plan to continue to learn more in the near future, with the hope of going back to California to train further.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE:

Planning a clear and realistic budget was vital for the success of the trip. I would suggest that being able to slightly over budget, made it easier for me to do more activities than I perhaps imagined. Early planning was important, having enough time to look around for the best possible deals in terms of accommodation/flights, as these are very variable.

PLANS TO SHARE:

I am currently sharing the work through my teaching, as the workshop has influenced my teaching a great deal. I will be making more of a formal presentation back in Wales in the near future. An article has been published in welsh current affairs magazine, detailing the trip and my work as an independent artist. I also plan to have a showing of Anna's films in two theatre venues back in the UK.

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Cai Tomos Tamalpa Institute California June 2011

During the last number of years, my thinking regarding my relationship to dance and dancing has changed a great deal. I worked as a performer for a number of years touring with a company and making my own work. In the last few years I felt the need to re-investigate why I danced, and how I could recover the meaning that dance once had when I was younger.

I had worked as performer, community dance artist, and lecturer. In the last few years I have felt increasingly drawn towards the therapeutic aspects of art and dance as tools for transformation, communication and change. I started the long journey of training as an Integrative Arts Psychotherapist. During this training I started to find what I thought I had lost in dance, the ability to play and enjoy movement for movements sake again.

In 2009 I was working as a performer in Switzerland. During this time Anna Halprin's film "Breath Made Visible" had just been released. On seeing this film I felt utterly inspired by what I had witnessed and made a commitment to myself to travel to USA to work with her.

In the summer of 2011 I travelled to the mountain home studio with the support of the Lisa Ullmann Travelling scholarship. It did take me some time to believe that I had arrived, what felt like a long pilgrimage of sorts had now become realised. I was interested in Anna's determination and passion for dance being a potent tool for healing and transformation. I had once myself suffered from clinical depression and found that the best medicine for myself in the hospital was to move and dance my way through the illness. Anna believes strongly in the power of dance and image to communicate deeply, not only to others, but also to ourselves.



(Mountain Home Studio)

The workshop format involved becoming familiar with Ann's Life/Art process. The days consisted of working with drawing and image work, to moving through some structured exercises that were framed around enhancing awareness of oneself and others. Anna's passion and determination and long history in dance was woven into the workshops through countless stories that traced back her history and lineage as a post-modern dancer and choreographer. Anna described her passion for dance and most importantly her passion for people, and that dance is for everyone.

It was particularly potent for me that Anna talked about her dancing life and the risks she took. She would often say, "What legacy are we leaving behind" "what difference has our lives made to those around us".

Hearing Anna talk about dance in this way was particularly inspiring, because I have always felt that my view of what dance is and what it can do has always been broad and expansive.

One aspect of Anna's work that I have found very inspiring is her work with older dancers. For the last two years I have been very interested in working with older people, I currently run two groups for older people one in a residential context and the other as part of an outreach programme for a theatre. Seeing Anna's reverence for the aging body and respect for the history that one carries in their body, has inspired me a great deal to continue my research in dance, health and well-being.



Cai Tomos/ Anna Halprin

I have directly used some of the skills that I gained doing the Tamalpa course with the groups that I currently run.

The experience of working with Anna has been one of the most personally rewarding I have experienced in dance. I have through Anna's work found that dance can become recourse in finding meaning in ones life. Dance and working with the body has been a constant companion and will continue to be so. I have found a community of like-minded people for whom dance is more than something they do, it is who they are. Anna's way of working and seeing dance in the broadest context possible has given me the opportunity to re-evaluate my own dance practice and re-navigate the direction I wish to pursue.

I hope that I can continue to make regular visits to the Tamalpa institute in California and continue my interest in following the work of Anna Halprin and her Daughter Daria Halprin.

It gives me great hope that at 93 years old Anna's continues to inspire and promote change in people and the world through her belief in dance, community and the healing arts. I am very grateful to the Lisa Ullmann Scholarship for their support in making this journey possible.

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