

Report from HAGIT BAR-FLEMING:

DEBORAH HAY SOLO COMMISSIONING PROJECT.

In 2005 I saw Deborah Hay performing her solo *Performance of Beauty* at Greenwich Dance Agency, London. This was an extraordinary, unique performance that intrigued me. It was inspiring and I could not point out what it was that captured me into her world. It may be the experimental aspects of her choreography or simply the feeling of intimacy she shared with the audience. It was a 'hard watch' and demanded me to be an active audience. It opened my senses and my view on dance as a performance art.

It was then that I became interested in taking part in the Solo Commissioning Project. It took another year for me to secure funds for the project and eventually, with the great support of Northern School of Contemporary Dance and the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship fund, I was able to travel to Findhorn, Scotland.

Arriving at Findhorn I did not know what to expect. It happened that the next 10 days changed the way I looked at my personal and professional life. It was ten days of intensive studio work in which the group of 20 international dance artists were challenged by the solo work named *News*. We learned, practiced and were coached by Deborah, and performed the piece a couple of times in front of the group as audience. This was followed by long discussion with Deborah about the nature of her work and the way she perceived choreography and movement.

I could not possibly document all this learning experiences. It was massive and each and every one of us perceived it in his own way. In the warm-ups Deborah said 'GET WHAT YOU NEED' and in a peculiar way it felt that at the end of the project each of us got what they needed. I 'got' the ability to 'look outside', actively looking while being aware of my body, the space around me and the time my movement created in that space. I have learned and experienced performance quality that is not based on form but rather on my consciousness. I experienced 'letting go' and 'inviting being seen', breathing and trusting my body as a performer and as an individual.

In Deborah's work / method the body and the choreography become a political tool, not in a sense of statements but in the way we, as individuals, interact with the surrounding, with others. Deborah's compassionate teaching and trust allowed me to break away from old habits and discover new areas of movement.

Coming back to London after the project it felt as though I had been under a spell. I wanted to keep it going. It was a positive one. As part of the project the performers sign a contract with Deborah, insuring three months of everyday (5 days a week) practice of the solo before the first performance. It is here when the spell goes on, the work keeps on expanding in my body and informing me. It is a delight to practice *News*. The practice is a one-hour a day in which all sources are drawn back into the body and in which I am getting what I need ...

As soon as I came back from the project I started a full time job as a Choreography Lecturer. Teaching is great, a fulfilling experience, yet it's a very 'giving' trade. Practicing the solo balances my work and the energies of Out and In, Giving and Receiving. Deborah's compassionate teaching inspired my educational work as much as my growth as a Dance Artist. I am looking forward to performing the piece in Spring 2007 at the NSCD and in other opportunities that may arise.

I am deeply grateful for the Lisa Ullmann Travelling Scholarship, which enabled me to undertake this project. I definitely could say that my creative life would be so different at this point of time without this experience.

Thank you, thank you, thank you.