



Art of Attachment. Photo: Vincent Dance Theatre

Holding space

Charlotte Vincent, choreographer and Artistic Director of Vincent Dance Theatre (VDT) makes 'crucial performance for the critical times in which we live'. She works with an intergenerational, diverse ensemble on stage, on film and online, with the intention of 'moving people and making them think'. VDT's productions make significant claims for gender politics, and increasingly for social change. Here is a short excerpt of Vincent's keynote presentation at LEAP 2018

Charlotte's most recent production formed a substantial part of an arts-based project called Art of Attachment, commissioned by a substance misuse charity Brighton Oasis Project (recently renamed Oasis Project www.oasisproject.org.uk), and funded by Wellcome Trust and Arts Council England, with Charlotte working as lead artist, alongside poet/broadcaster Lemn Sissay.

Vincent's project explored the complex emotional bonds that exist between women in recovery and their partners, children, family and friends. As rapport built with Vincent over 9

months, alongside a growing understanding of the creative process, stories and life experiences were shared that could be respectfully and carefully staged by the women and regular VDT collaborators Antonia Grove and Robert Clark, with understudy Anna Clasper. Text was written in collaboration with the women, Rob, Vincent and Wendy Houstoun with a soundtrack - including womens' voices Vincent recorded early in the process - composed by Jules Maxwell.

The work aimed to reduce stigma and challenge professionals and members of the general public alike to reflect on how we judge the chaotic lifestyles of women involved in substance misuse, without fully understanding the life events or mental health issues that lead them to misusing.

Essentially Art of Attachment worked with trauma narratives to allow the women to fully express themselves and explored hard hitting images around abuse, mental health, domestic violence, child protection and addiction - alongside an impressive and moving display of emotional and physical resilience by the women, performing on stage for an hour.

Written by Wendy Houstoun, who brought together fragments of recordings from workshops, details from psychological reports and slices of life chronologies offered up by the cast, the women perform this text at the beginning of the work: >

Performance

*So picture this:
Here I am.
Sitting here. In my seat.
And I want things.
I want all sorts of things.
Mainly I want to be happy.
And content.
Just like everyone else.*

*But picture this.
I am alone.
I am feeling alone and sad.*

*And I am in a dark room.
Behind a brick wall.
Inside a relationship.
Because I am stupid.
Look at me. I am stupid.
I am mad. I have gone mad.
I have gone completely mad and I have done all
sorts of things.*

*And I want to talk about them....
Difficult. It's difficult. I am difficult.
I was difficult.
But words get in the way.
Words I couldn't read get in the way.*

*Words like:
Birth. Reject. Birth. Reject. Repeat. Birth. Reject.
Alone. Alone. Miles from home. Evil man. Abuse.
Death. Grieve.
Reject. Reject. Reject. Dope. Coke. Dope. Coke.
Battle.*

*And the words keep getting in the way.
Words I don't even want to say:*

*Escape. bedsit. 16. Loner. Man. Older. Control.
Children. 2 children. Escape. Alone. Refuge.
Fighting. Courts. Lose. Family. Gone.*

*So here I am.
Miles from nowhere. With this brick wall around
me.
And just the words: Partner. Crash. Dark. Car
Crash. Stop. Drink. Go. Stop. Coke. Stop. Drink. Go.
Dark. Stop. Coke Once a week. Twice a day. Every
day. Years. 1 year. 2 years. 3 years. 4 years. 5 years.
6 years. 7 years. Dark. Stop. Dark. Stop.*

*Then picture this.
Here I am. Sitting here.
Here I am. Sitting here. In my seat.
And I want things.
I want all sorts of things.
Mainly I want to be happy. And content. Just like
everyone else.*



Info

admin@vincentdt.com
www.vincentdt.com
f /vincentdance
+44 1273 911 616

All: Art of Attachment. Photos: Vincent Dance Theatre

