

Dance West Network: Review of the "Re-Centering Margins" Performance

By Carrie Anne Fleming

The "Re-Centering Margins" performance, held at Antler Ridge Dance Studio on Salt Spring Island by Dance West Network, was a powerful celebration of BIPOC communities. This program supports dancers in focusing on their craft, providing a nurturing environment to explore their identities and human stories. The rich, personal performances captivated the audience.



Photo of Re-Centering/Margins Residency Artists, Guest Artists, and Dance West Network Team by Metta Rose Photography. Pictured from left to right: Sophie Dow, Jullianna Oke, Tegvaran Sooch, Perelandra Waddle, Punit Singh, Ysadora Dias, Sevrin Emnancen-Boyd, and Shahir Qrishnaswamy.



Photo of Jullianna Oke, by Metta Rose Photography

Jullianna Oke's performance was particularly moving and striking. Her quaking fluidity and control over each limb and joint were mesmerizing. Moments of stillness, where Jullianna looked at each audience member, were deeply impactful. This coming to stillness and not needing to hide from connection was comforting, creating a profound sense of intimacy and presence.

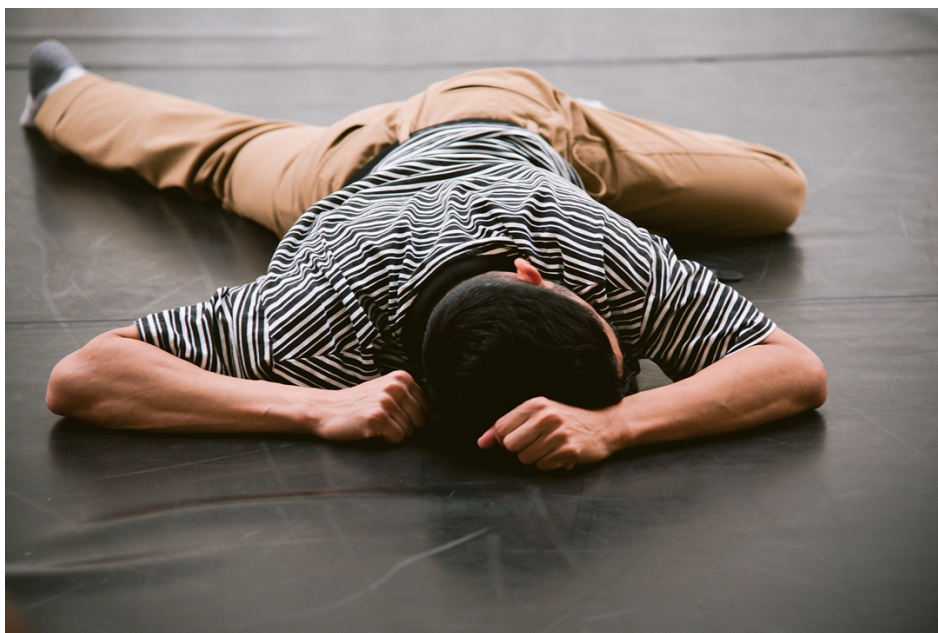


Photo of Punit Singh, by Metta Rose Photography

Punit Singh brought a piece that was both dance and monologue. Weaving a story with his body and repeating words with different inflections, we were transported to his childhood bedroom, his kitchen table, and then to a restaurant where he struggles to speak up for himself. All connected seamlessly.

Ysadora Dias's piece was filled with joy and the call of song. Movements showed an element of being picked at by society, working hard, being submissive, and waiting for it all to stop. When it doesn't, the warrior comes forth, and the Brazilian martial art of Capoeira was included in her piece. It was magical to see and hear.



Photo of Ysadora Dias, by Metta Rose Photography



Photo of Shahir Qrishnaswamy, by Metta Rose Photography

Shahir Qrishnaswamy gave us life, to put it mildly. A gorgeous expression of the power of the feminine and the boundaries that need to be clear so that expression can be held in a container for the artist to cultivate a presence in safety. The container is not for viewing as an object but for worship, inspiring others to be free in how they choose to create their art. Life is art, is what Shahir seems to be saying. You too can be this beautiful every moment of your life.



Photo of Tegvaran Sookh, by Metta Rose Photography

Tegvaran Sookh's dance led me from prayer to meditation, to exerting strength, then becoming that which he worshiped, and then changing his mind. This is what I saw: a young man looking towards uncharted territory. He's blazing through so the young people who come after will see this path he's burned as an option.



Photo of Perelandra Waddle, by Metta Rose Photography

As the videographer, I had the unique privilege of witnessing the event through an impartial lens first. However, technology poses challenges. During Perelandra Waddle's piece, my camera battery unexpectedly died. In a hurried effort, I switched to my phone but regrettably missed capturing her well-deserved applause. This review serves as my heartfelt applause to Perelandra Waddle, whose mesmerizing performance left an indelible mark on all who were present. A gifted speaker, Perelandra shared that her work is inspired by a favorite sci-fi novel.



Photo of Sevrin Emnancen-Boyd, by Metta Rose Photography

Sevrin Emnancen-Boyd gave us a star performance that felt like stepping into a film noir. His skill level gave his choreography such grace that, at certain moments, it was like I was seeing his movements in reverse. It was so beautiful and calming the way he disappeared into his dance and mind space. Just wow!

In the discussions following the performance, the dancers shared their experiences of their process, inspirations, and the effects of racism, poverty, and restrictive religious upbringings. Their honesty and vulnerability underscored the importance of platforms like Dance West Network, which nurture both artistic expression and emotional well-being. These dancers understand the subtlety of their message, speaking to our hearts. Tired of explaining and re-triggering themselves, they dance to create authentic change.

While editing the footage, I was filled with waves of emotion, re-watching the performances and listening to the dancers speak. The diversity of the performers and the richness of their stories made the "Re-Centering Margins" performance an unforgettable day, highlighting the transformative power of dance and being held by the community. It reinforced the necessity of creating inclusive spaces where diverse voices can be heard and celebrated.

After my team and I wrapped for the day, we met for a drink at a restaurant in town. Being the small town that it is, the dancers were seated at a table close to us. As my partner and I brainstormed ideas for an upcoming event, undoubtedly inspired by what we had just witnessed, I glanced up to wave to the dancers as they left the restaurant. Beautiful, optimistic, embodied, young people. As they stood outside the restaurant, the music was so loud it reached them, and they couldn't help but dance.

Biography:

Carrie Anne Fleming is a Canadian writer and filmmaker living on Salt Spring Island. With a vibrant film and television career in shows like iZombie, Supernatural, Smallville, and Continuum, she now focuses on her writing and co-leads the FOSSIFF film group, organizing the Filmed on Salt Spring Island Film Festival. Carrie Anne's passion for storytelling has led to her being published in a collection of women's stories, pitching films at the Whistler Film Festival and travelling to various conventions in the UK. She's currently working on feature film scripts and short films set on the island. A former dancer with Kidco Dance Company, her love for dance continues to inspire her creative work.