

Rachel Freeman/ Blue Eyed Soul Dance Company – CI and Integrated Dance

Inclusion, integration, intuition

I realise that the beauty of the integrated work is the challenge that different bodies offer, no assumptions can be made, and new techniques have to be searched for. This is particularly evident in CI which not only confronts physical, psychological and emotional barriers but equally produces great satisfaction and joy. Blue Eyed Soul's approach is not new and our methods are simply an accumulation of things adopted and adapted, there are many paths to the same end and we allow ourselves to explore them all. The work concerns what it really means to live and work in an inclusive way, looking at and listening to the quietest of voices. Rather than perceive physical disability as a bar to dance Blue Eyed Soul has worked with dancers capabilities. Simple maneuvers demand new techniques and lead to fascinating, quirky and beautiful movement solutions. But the company goes further than overcoming difficulties with inventive answers. Far from being restricted our dancers open up a huge range of options that a non-disabled company wouldn't have. Working with wheels gives more possibilities, gliding, spinning, lifting... confronting the issue of physical disability head-on is liberating. But our aim is not to create work that is about disability but that has an aesthetic value of its own.

More time is needed for people with complex communication needs. Initial time spent working out the language between you whether it's with the eyes, a word board; basic mime/signing etc. pays off in the long term. There is never enough time! Listening in the widest sense of the word not only includes the hearing of words but a physical listening when every detail of movement can be 'heard', its dynamic, rhythm, energy and intention, where it comes from and where it is going to. The bottom line is working with what we have in common. If someone can only move his or her head and eyes that's the base of the workshop, the anchor that everything is fixed upon and develops from. As far as I can remember I have always aspired to work in an inclusive and integrated way. I continue to get things wrong and I delight at the amount there is still to learn.

