**Hull Dance 2017 Evaluation**

**Transgressions, HU1 and Hull Dance Prize**

**Summary:**

Hull Dance organised three events over the course of Hull 2017 to support the emerging dance ecology.

Transgressions Friday 12 May - Sunday 14 May 2017

HU1 6, 7, 8 and 17 October 2017

Hull Dance Prize 11 November 2017

and joined with Hull Truck to support the SOROR residency as part of WOW

SOROR January 25, 26 2017 and 9, 10 March 2017.

In addition the team supported local professional dancers to pursue their own projects and initiatives. This has included the introduction of a weekly community adult contemporary dance class.

The team also planned to refresh and improve the Hull Dance brand and publicity including investment in a new website.

***Transgressions Contemporary Dance Festival*** Audience: 720

With the theme of “Breaking the Rules” *Transgressions* was the first Contemporary Dance Festival to be held in Hull and asked

*What is contemporary dance in the 21st century? What are the rules and who dares to break them*?

The weekend event included a mix of performances, classes, discussion and panel groups.

*Transgressions* was curated by a group of dancers working in the contemporary idiom, selected through open application and interview. Membership of the group was open to dancers living in Hull or those living in Yorkshire with an established relationship with Hull Dance. The dancers selected were Jon Beney, Mark Pearce, Campbell Edinborough, Tamar Draper, Sarah Roe, Sian Myers and Fenella Ryan. The 3 sessions with the group were facilitated by Wieke Eringa, CEO and Artistic Director of Yorkshire Dance supported by Hull Dance Team members, Keyna Paul and Tara Mckeown.

The tone of the event was established on the Friday evening with a Performance created by Jo Fong working with local dancers and performed at Bongo Bongo followed by a DJ set.

Throughout the weekend internationally renowned New Art Club created their usual brand of mayhem in the council chamber at The Guildhall and Middleton Corpus performed “Cloud” to enthusiastic crowds in St Mary’s Church.

Colette Sadler’s challenging solo *Notebook Series* took place at Humber Street Gallery, where she created a conversation with her laptop. Families also enjoyed her work *We Are The Monsters* at Central Library set in a cardboard city inhabited by weird and wacky monsters.

Rita Marcalo’s *Dancing with* *Strangers: From Calais to Dover* and *Flesh*, a twist on the traditional late night party, took place at Humber Street Gallery, which also formed the base for the weekend.

We used this platform to introduce our new marketing strategy, including refreshed brand and design, better channels of communication with 2017 marketing team, developed with support from Marketing Consultant Georgette Purdey.

***HU1 Residency and Event*** Audience: 40

Lydia Cotterill and Ben Mills won the Professional Panel Award at Hull Dance Prize 2016 with *Atomic*. They used the money as partnership funding for an ACE research and development application which was successful. Part of the winner’s agreement between the artists and Hull Dance was that they would undertake a short residency as they developed the work and perform the resulting piece in Hull during 2017.

A residency was held at Hull New Theatre and Hull College and the longer piece performed at Fruit. Audience members provided feedback to Lydia and Ben about the full evening work.

***Hull Dance Prize 2017*** Audience: 144

The event was held again at Hull Truck Theatre and better communication between those involved led to a positive and well publicised event.

Five companies were short-listed to perform on the night from the nine applications received. Two of these representing Hull:

* Grim Visions in collaboration with Živilė Virkutytė - *Rosetta*
* JoinedUp Dance Co - *This Tide of Humber*

The remaining three representing West Yorkshire:

* Jamaal Burkmar Dance Company - *Volume 1*
* Tora Hed - *Deep Sea*
* TheMiddletonCorpus - *Seedling*

The choreographic and performing standards again improved this year and the re-structure of the event led to a positive atmosphere with audience members, artists and professional panel members all discussing the pieces performed. This year the Professional Panel of Industry Specialists comprised Lea Anderson, Alex Croft and Liv Lorent. They gave their award to Hull based Grim Visions and the audience voted for TheMiddltetonCorpus to receive their award. Meetings are now being held with both companies to negotiate how the money is used to further their development, mindful of the feedback they received from the professional panel alongside their and Hull Dance’s aspirations

***Soror Residency as Part of Wow*** Audience: 162

Hull Dance and Hull Truck supported the SOROR residency as part of WOW. SOROR was conceived by Zoe Jones and directed by choreographer Ella Robson Guilfoyle. Exploring ideas of womanhood Zoe and Ella worked with local professional dancers and women living on Thornton Estate during a two week residency to explore ideas and develop material for the piece of circus dance.

The work was previewed, accompanied by an after show panel discussion, on 9 March. The discussion was inspired by Lucy's Tonic Paper about the challenges facing women choreographers and focused more on what is needed in the future and how thing are changing, moving and developing although included some historical tales from those on the panel!

The panel was chaired by Petia Tzanova and included Sharon Watson, Tamsin Fitsgerald and Ella Robson-Guilfoyle.

***Learning Points:***

The enthusiasm and interest from the general public for the work presented at Transgressions was surprising. It gave a really positive impression of dance in the city to the artists who were featured and demonstrated the potential for the inclusion of such events in future programming.

As Humber Street Gallery was not completed and the precise nature of the exhibitions not known when the programme for *Transgressions* had to be finalised it was a calculated risk to base the event at HSG, the support and flexibility of Humber Street Gallery staff was important to the success of the event. The quirkier work with Colette Sadler and Rita Macarlo worked particularly well in the space, both pieces working well alongside the exhibitions

The popularity of Humber Street Gallery Bar for social gatherings means that noise from the bar transmits throughout the whole building during the evening and impacts on any performances

Transgressions was the first time that Hull Dance had access to booking information and gave the opportunity to start developing a central database of attenders and this is now regularly updated and used for direct communication and marketing.

Holding Hull Dance Prize annually has enabled us to establish its profile, however feedback suggests that a bi-annual event may be more beneficial. A bi-annual event will enable Hull Dance to give more support to the short-listed companies and give companies more time to develop their work and identity between events

Hosting a Contemporary Dance Festival using unusual spaces bi-annually would complement the Hull Dance Prize

The relationships developed with Lydia and Ben and TheMiddletonCorpus gives models for how Hull Dance can support and invest in regional artists and influence the type of work that is created and programmed

The Soror residency is an illustration of how Hull Dance will work in partnership with Hull Truck in the future by bringing additionality to their dance programme.

Developing a new website proved difficult. The marketing company were particularly slow and we therefore missed our target date with Hull City Council to launch it at the Transgression Festival.

***Development and Future Plans:***

Two unsuccessful applications were made to ACE during the early part of 2017. Following extensive feedback and consideration of the various options available to build on the work undertaken through the Hull Dance initiative, it has been decided to establish Hull Dance as a Community Interest Company with a two-year action plan.

Hull City Council is prepared to make a larger contribution to the development of Hull Dance over the next two years recognising that an independent organisation will need seed funding to build on the strong foundations laid and knowledge gained during the past few years so that a successful profile for contemporary dance in the city can continue to evolve. Investment has been made putting together and developing the current staff team who are keen to be part of a new company. Additional financial support will be needed.

The present professional contemporary dance community in Hull includes dancers working in education and community settings. The newer area of health and wellbeing is less well supported, the independent Hull Dance will expand to include this area of work and we will look to health/sport funding to increase the potential income for the new company.

The key areas in the action plan will be to

* Build on the new Hull Dance branding with a new website set to launch early 2018.
* Build on the success of the Curatorial Group.
* Alternate Hull Dance Prize and Transgressions every other year.
* Develop a health and wellbeing strand of work
* Hull City Council will take a lead on exploring the potential of a Dance space.

January 2017