

Shoelaces Unravelling

Jessica Oliphant

Medium/Form: Dance, poetry, visual art

Key words: performance ethnography, performance art, interdisciplinary performance

This performance presentation is a multi-disciplinary performance exploring the phenomenon of journeying through life with a sense of ongoing and continuous change and discovery that accompanies this process.

This creative exploration will use the metaphor of shoes and journeying and integrates the saying 'if you want to know someone, walk a mile in their shoes', as a catalyst for the work. This work will not simply seek to embody this idiom, but rather will use it as a point of departure to establish the notion of the various shoes we put on (our own, and sometimes those inherited from others) along our journey of life.

Narrative Provocation:

We wake up, eat, bathe, dress, and then put on socks or not, and we do put on shoes. I'm not only talking about those who have a closet of shoes. What about the people who sleep beneath a bridge, what shoes do they put on? What about those who only have one slice of bread and must eat it carefully for it to last the entire week? What about the people who cry every night about their baby because they aren't ready wear to wear the shoes called motherhood? A man who feels that life is constantly beating him down but still manages to get up, what shoes does he wear? What shoes does a woman wear when she is continuously fighting and standing up for herself to the point where it becomes her insecurity? What shoes does a father who doesn't have a job but nurtures his child and will go to any length to protect her wear?

The piece depicts the journeys of individuals as they attempt to tie the knot on their journey. When the knot has been loosened in some way, this piece conveys a feeling that is felt rather than seen.

The performance will mix visual arts, dance, and poetry.

The performance will go as follows: A videotape of ten people of various ages will take us on a journey down their path. This will be shown both before and after the performance. The words from the tape that will be embodied in the dancing improvisation. The poem will express the shoelace metaphor that emerges from the journeys depicted by the contributors. The poem will direct the audience's attention to their shoelaces, which have either been knotted or unfastened.

Shoelaces indicate steadiness. Shoelaces either cause us to trip or assist us in continuing to walk. You will trip if your shoelaces go unfastened. The shoelaces symbolise our journey, the zig zags throughout our lives. Nothing is ever straight.

Biography

Jessica Oliphant is a former dancer and trainee with Vuyani Dance Theatre and Moving into Dance. I am a firm believer in artists' equal rights and support platforms that allow artists to freely communicate their stories because this is how we represent our reality.