

Taking class at Independent Dance

Walking from the hectic streets of central London into the shadowy entrance of Siobhan Davies Studios is a little like immersing oneself into an oasis of viscous liquid. Everything slows down, and for a moment I feel myself breathe out. I am greeted by a calm and polite receptionist whom I know will say everything in all the right order, a direct and distinct switch from the rich sound clash that is Elephant and Castle market. In ascending the stairs, this beautiful building unfolds, and I feel the tranquil atmosphere envelop me. Colours, textures and shapes seem to blend effortlessly together, encouraging within me a resounding sense of aesthetic satisfaction.

On entering the studios, my eyes are immediately drawn upwards and I feel a dizzying sense of awe as the 'ribbon' roof undulates and curves above my forehead. My body is suddenly awake and urging to eat up all of the space that I see before me. I spot other participants lying in various positions on the floor, some static, some moving or shaking, all completely absorbed in their own bodies, and not seeming to take any notice of who is walking through the door. I feel any tension that I may have had on entering the room slowly melt away. It is immediately obvious here that there is little pressure to perform. I lie on the floor and stare up at the roof, finding solace in the fact that I have every right to do just that, and through this I find endless inspiration from the swelling arches that are presented before me.

The teacher addresses the class in their current state, promoting improvised movement as a way of exploring how their bodies are at that moment in time. Encouraging poetic words seem to wind themselves around the room, taking me on my own journey as they wrap around my very consciousness. I am now so concentrated inwards that I can almost see outwards, my chest relaxes, and it is as if my vision reaches up above my eye-line and seems to sit just in the centre of my forehead. I am blind but have never seen such vibrancy. I feel all prior worries and thoughts that may have been subconsciously pervading my mind fall away as if rain drops down a pane of glass.

I am now moving efficiently, using just the right amount of effort to provide me with a heightened sense of bodily awareness, without letting go of the root that is in the centre of my forehead. I am encouraged to open my vision and see the environment around me; and that ribbon roof spins itself into view alongside a window view of blue sky. I can feel other bodies moving around me, carving through space, and I feel at one with them, as if we are all part of the same intricate machine of moving entities. I feel satisfaction in the thought that we are all sharing the same experiential occurrence, and feel deep contentment at my own joyous fluidity.

Time no longer seems an object, it is not as partitioned and split up as I am used to, so inevitably ticks by unnoticed. It is ten minutes before the end of the two hour class before I look at the clock, however I feel fulfilled enough not to wish for any more. My body is fed.

I float down the stairs after class and see the door to the rest of London beckoning me. My day is yawning in front of me, but together with this enormous sense of fulfilment and well being, even the packed lifts at Elephant and Castle tube station don't seem so bad.