

1 – How do you define yourself?

I often define myself as a self-identifying disabled performing artist. I am also a woman, a choreographer and I am based in Glasgow in Scotland, all aspects that I think are significant and have made my career possible in various ways, or have influenced the work I make. I define myself differently, as we all do, depending on who we are talking to and where we are, and it continues to change as I grow older.

I tend to state that I am a self-identifying disabled artist as it became clear to me a few years ago that my work, my perspective, in the world is clearly influenced by having grown up with a physical impairment, and it was important for me to own the reality of that influence, and to endorse it as something that creates a degree of originality in my work. It was also important to state that I identified myself with the influence of disability in my life, as opposed to being identified solely by others as disabled. There is a form of ownership in taking that title within the description I give of myself. My work is not *about* disability as far as I am concerned but it is very much informed by the lived experience of it.

I make work that is movement based but can include text, song, aerial work, video, puppetry – whatever is necessary in the moment to convey an idea.

I have developed a movement technique that is based around my own physicality and knowledge and use of crutches, with a conscious rejection of training in traditional contemporary dance techniques (which are developed for non-disabled bodies) or attempting to move with the pretense of a body or aesthetic other than my own.

2 – What brings you to In'Arte?

I am here at InArte by invitation – following members of InArte seeing my show *Menage a Trois* last year in London as part of the Unlimited Festival – showcasing work by leading Deaf and disabled UK artists as part of the Cultural Olympiad. I am also here as part of the Unlimited Access projects -that have brought European partner countries and arts organisations together to support the development of disability arts and artists in their own countries by sharing skills and work between UK and other European artists. Unfortunately due to a very busy schedule this summer – I am making a new show- I am only able to be in Lisbon for a very short time (2 days) but I was keen to be able to come here, even if only for a short time to start a connection with InArte and the artists they work with. I am very keen to learn more about who is working as disabled artists, or the training of disabled artists across Europe and what part I can play in supporting this as someone who has been given huge support by Creative Scotland, British Council and many independent producers and mentors to achieve my own potential.

3 – What are you going to show us?

I will share tasks and methodology that I have learned and used in the development of my own practice both as a performer and as a maker of performance. I am keen to look at ways we can discover the individuality of people, in particular disabled artists and develop movement and encourage original perspectives rather than trying to emulate non-disabled techniques or forms. I believe on Saturday you will also see short video footage of my performance work and perhaps some interviews with me from festivals where I have previously presented my work.

4 – What are your expectations?

I hope to meet new people I have not encountered before, who will offer me new insights and questions, and new relationships with more artists and organisations. Sadly I don't think I will have much time to see much of Lisbon itself but hopefully maybe some local cuisine and beer?!