

Fiona Keenan O'Brien

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I am a dancer and actor working with the rurally-based physical theatre company Quintessence for the last five years. Such opportunities continuously challenge me as a performer and collaborator. In addition, I am also fortunate to work as a freelance choreographer and teacher. However, since returning to Ireland in 2010, choreography prospects have been mainly drawn to commercial work, which has lessened my attention on my own individual artistry.

I am delighted with this amazing opportunity considering the current circumstances we are facing. This residency will provide me the chance to return to myself as a dancer and choreographer, and allow me to get back to my roots. My solo practice is inspired by the five senses and I wish to explore how movement can inhibit and translate new experiences.

August has been a busy month, with the first three weeks of the residency combining with my involvement as both performer and choreographer in An Tain Arts Centre's production of Beauty and the Beast, which took place in the beautiful grounds of Anaverna House in Ravensdale.

I am currently in the research and development phase of my solo practice on the five senses. So far, I have been pleasantly surprised by how much I have achieved; learning about each sense and finding inspiring initiatives, which has already led to a rough outline for my solo choreography.

The past three weeks have also motivated me to discuss my ideas and process with fellow artists; opening up communication and encouraging alternative dialogue. Two of my professional peers have accepted my invitation to observe my process and provide me with feedback at the end of September. Such a prospect may not have happened only for the residency.

In the next few days, I will start choreographing five movement sequences from my research and begin the development phase next week.

I have learned to be a dancer while not dancing but it is time I dance again. My bond with dance was always there and I look forward to strengthening it again. I am curious as to what kind of new and reinvigorated dance artist will emerge.

Fiona Keenan O'Brien is An Táin Arts Centre's dance artist in residence. Fiona will be in residence during August, September and October 2020. Follow her progress on @antainarts #antainartists