

ARTISTIC BIO- LAURA SARAH DOWDALL



Laura Sarah Dowdall is an innovative dance artist creating engaging performance that is experiential, immersive and permeable to audience interaction, incorporating mixed media, sound and voice.

Laura was a recipient of the Next Generation Artist Bursary Award from the Arts Council of Ireland in 2017, Dancer in Resident in RUA RED arts centre in 2017, selected and mentored by International Performance Artist Jennifer Walshe for Body Noise Work, a multidisciplinary project throughout 2018 supported by the Arts Council and has been awarded the Pavilion Theatre Studio Space award for 2019.

She incorporates instant composition, immersive theatre and durational performance into contemporary dance work that is site-specific, staged and on film. The artist's research and choreography center on developing new avenues for audience engagement, breaking boundaries of hierarchy and expectation, and offering experiences of heightened awareness.

Her choreographic work has been performed in:

- Temple Bar Gallery, December 2018;
- The Model Gallery, Sligo August 2018;
- Rua Red Performance Space 2017;
- Smock Alley Scene+Heard Festival 2016;
- National Choreographic Showcase, Boston (USA) 2016;
- Echo Echo Festival 2015, Derry (NI) and
- Dance Theatre of Ireland in 2015

Laura's Screen Dance Films 'Elan' and 'Between' have been shown in festivals in Ireland and abroad.

Based on her artistic practice and movement research, she has developed a series of dance workshops which she has facilitated in Ireland and in the USA.

INFLUENCES

Laura enjoys collaborative practice and interdisciplinary exchange. She works with choreographers, dance theatre companies, filmmakers and collaborators in Germany, Ireland, France and the USA. She has worked with a collective of international artists researching the performative body in its expanded, transformative, political and imaginative states.

Laura has had the opportunity to work and train with innovative creators in the field of experimental physical performance, contemporary dance, voice, contact and improvisation, some of which include: Rosalind Crisp, Andrew Morrish, Julyen Hamilton, Andrew Harwood, Nancy Stark Smyth, Maya Carroll, Bettina Neuhaus, Eva Karczeg, Stephanie Skura, Karen Nelson, Kirstie Simons, Stephanie Maher, Noa Zuk, German Jauregui and Tom Pritchard.

PROJECTS & ACHIEVEMENTS

Laura was selected by the Arts Council of Ireland for the 'Next Generation Artist Bursary Award' for 2017. She was 'Dancer in Residence' at Rua Red for 2017 and has been selected for the Studio Residency Award for 2019 at the Pavilion Theatre, Dun Laoghaire.

In 2018, Laura has been engaged in residential intensives at The Dock Theatre with multi-disciplinary artists in a project known as '*Body Noise*', mentored by international performance artist Jennifer Walsh and supported by The Arts Council of Ireland. This project culminated in a collective performance in December 2018 where Laura presented new interactive solo performance *PROXY*.



In 2018, Laura further developed her Inclusive Dance work, *Running Blind*, and delivered two six week programmes in collaboration with the National Council for the Blind, supported by the DLR Arts Office and the *Arts Access Grant*. The impact of this work was acknowledged with receipt of the *Dublin Bus Community Spirit Award*, which was announced in November 2018.

RUNNING BLIND

Laura's choreographic work 'Running Blind' began in 2015. It focuses on heightening awareness and perspective through the stimulus and hindering of our sensory and kinaesthetic environments. She was awarded the Artist in the Community Award managed by CREATE (Ireland) and supported by mentor Amanda Coogan, to work with the Anne Sullivan centre for DeafBlind in 2015. Since then she continues her relationship and weekly class with the residents. In 2016, Laura extended this project to investigate new forms of experiencing dance through haptic communication and audio description. She was awarded the Dance Ireland 2016 Tyrone Guthrie Centre Residency Award to facilitate this research, working with collaborators, Walei Sabre, accessibility activist working in New York and Janie Doherty, contemporary dancer based in Derry. Laura was the recipient of the Dance Ireland Mentored Residency award in 2016 where she worked with, Writer, Dancer and Theatre Director, Tom Pritchard to explore the use of text and voice in dance as a creative tool and integral element of dance performance.



As Dancer-in-Residence at Rua Red in 2017, Laura facilitated a programme of creative lab sessions with participants who are blind and integrated workshops with professional and community dancers. In August 2017, she presented an accessible dance performance that incorporated tactile environment, immersive soundscape, interactive performance and live audio-description. Three of the six performances included audience with sight-loss.

In 2018, Laura further developed this Inclusive Dance project, delivering two six week programmes in collaboration with the National Council for the Blind, supported by the DLR Arts Office, Sports Partnership and Vision Sports Ireland.

In July 2018, the *Irish Independent* featured this project as the cover story of their Health Supplement: [Click here to see the 2 page article.](#)

For more details on Laura's work see:

www.laurasarahdowdall.wix.com/dancer

www.runningblind.ie