

Case study

Abby Johnson

Details

What:

Abby Johnson attended the month-long international dance festival ImPulsTanz in Vienna, Austria. She participated in twelve different (week long) workshops given by teachers and choreographers from varying artistic backgrounds and practices. Through ImPulsTanz, Abby was exposed to new ways of thinking about solo performance, partnering and improvisation. She also gained greater knowledge about current European dance companies and the dance scene in many countries of the continent.

Abby attended performances that were presented as part of the festival, giving her the opportunity to view dance work that she would not normally have access to in Australia.

Abby used the information and experiences from ImPulsTanz in developing a solo work for her performance group, MakeShift Dance Collective, that was performed at the Studio 188 Performance-in-Progress Series in October 2014.

When:

July to August 2014

Where:

Vienna, Austria

Arts Queensland contribution:

\$3503 – Individuals Fund



Abby at ImPulsTanz, Vienna

Contact for further information:

Email: abby.johnson89@gmail.com

Website: <http://www.makeshiftdance.com.au/people-abby-johnson>

Links:

Abby's photos from ImPulsTanz:

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.10152221350827084.1073741829.679387083&type=1&l=9427fa78>

Outcomes

- Through attending ImPulsTanz, Abby gained a wealth of knowledge about the practices and techniques of many European dance companies and artists which she wouldn't be able to access in Australia.
- Working full-time for a month, dancing six hours per day reinvigorated Abby's passion for the profession of dance and also for the daily discipline required.
- As an independent artist, Abby often performs solo rather than as a partner within duo work. ImPulsTanz gave her the opportunity to participate in partnering workshops, developing her confidence in the techniques involved in catching, supporting and moving with another dancer and to incorporate these new skills within her work.
- Abby established many contacts with people from Europe and areas of the Asia Pacific. Abby is confident these connections will develop into working relationships in the future. An exchange with a dancer from Darwin has already begun.



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Learnings and reflections

Through ImPulsTanz, Abby has realised the importance of collaboration to her artistic process:

The workshops I enjoyed the most were those that gave us the opportunity to discuss, experiment and debate with each other about the relevant subject/task in hand. I felt stimulated, motivated and inspired by those around me. In the future, I will ensure that I participate in artistic climates that encourage this collaborative notion rather than a dictatorial type of teacher/student relationship.

Abby also learned the importance of context to the teaching/choreographic process:

Many of the performances that I attended as a part of the festival were quite 'dance theatre' based and did not feature a large amount of dance movement. After speaking with local dancers from Austria, I was informed that this is the particular taste of the main funding body for dance in the country. Information such as this is vital to know if I were to ever apply to tour an independent work to Austria and has brought to my attention the need to research such trends before applying to funding bodies

Abby noted her biggest challenge as the stamina required to complete three two-hour long workshops every week day for one month. She observed that:

It is hard to process everything when you are physically exhausted. If I were to attend the festival again, I would consider only completing two workshops per day which would also give me more time in between classes to process information and speak with others/make networking opportunities etc.