

Skinner Releasing Technique

Joan Skinner is a seminal figure in international dance and performance. An American choreographer, teacher, improvisation pioneer and former dancer with the Martha Graham and Merce Cunningham companies, Joan Skinner is now an esteemed dance elder and Professor Emeritus at the University of Washington. Joan Skinner developed and refined Skinner Releasing Technique over five decades into a comprehensive training system that has radically influenced dance performance, creation and education across the world.

Skinner Releasing Technique (SRT) is an influential and rigorous approach to movement evolved from the principle that releasing tension and habitual holding patterns enables greater freedom, power and articulation. At times inward and detailed, oftentimes highly dynamic, this challenging and disciplined approach uses anatomical and poetic imagery, as well as hands-on partner studies. It facilitates the creative exploration of technical principles such as multi-directional alignment, suspension, suppleness, readiness and economy.

'This technique is a system of kinesthetic training that refines the perception and performance of movement. Images are given which are metaphors of kinesthetic experience of technical principles. The poetic imagery kindles the imagination, thereby integrating technique with creative process' Joan Skinner, 2005

Deborah Hay

Deborah Hay is widely acknowledged by both international critics and historians as one of the most influential representatives of postmodern dance. During the 1960s, Hay danced briefly with the Merce Cunningham Dance Company before joining a group of experimental artists, deeply influenced by Cunningham and John Cage. This group, Judson Dance Theater, which included Yvonne Rainer, Steve Paxton, Lucinda Childs and Trisha Brown, became one of the most radical and explosive art movements of the twentieth century. Deborah Hay's recent group work, *If I Sing to You* (2008), a commission from The Forsythe Company, received audience and critical acclaim through international touring. In 2000, she notably created *Single Duet* for herself and Mikhail Baryshnikov, which toured with the Past/Forward project. In 2007 Hay received a BAXten Award: *'Your experimental work has remained alive and contemporary over four decades, inspiring your colleagues and peers and now - new generations of choreographers and performers. Your sustained commitment and your willingness to change course provides an example for others. Your articulate writing on the body and dance has had a profound impact on the field.'*

Deborah Hay's orientation to dance is activated by attention to practices of performance. In intense learning environments she challenges performers with movement concepts that trigger multiple levels of perception at once. She choreographs the world "between" moments, where movement proclivity plays second fiddle to exercised inquiry. Hay rarely demonstrates solutions to choreography. Rather, she conveys her concepts through directives that each performer translates individually into movement in their unique way. Choreographic directives are recorded as a written text, often poetic, that acts as a score for performance. The artist is bound to this material through meditation-like exercises that are applied throughout her choreographed dances.