Abstract Submission

Dance & Somatic Practice Conference

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Power Point Presentation

**Fascia And Dance: Exploring The Science Behind The Somatics.**

This paper examines emerging concepts underpinning current research into fascial anatomy and body architecture and considers this knowledge in relation to dance and somatic practice. The paper is informed by the work of Tom Myers and Robert Schleip, who currently lead the field in fascial research. It includes an investigation into what fascia is, where it is and how it connects, alongside a consideration biotensegrity, the concept of the body as a tensegrity structure, of which fascia as a pre-stressed web of connective tissue forms an intrinsic part.

Recent advances in human dissection are leading to a more clearly defined understanding of fascial structure and function. This paper examines the key concepts that underpin the research, including fascia’s versatility and plasticity, its role in structural support, proprioception, kinetic memory, movement efficiency, and the transmission and integration of movement. These concepts suggest a new perspective on the common view of anatomy and biomechanics, of the skeleton suspended in a supportive web of connective tissue, rather than as a structural framework mobilised by muscle groups working in isolation.

In light of this research, somatic practices favoured by dance practitioners to supplement training and enhance performance are considered. These include Bartenieff Fundamentals, Feldenkrais and BMC, and are examined with a view to understanding the science behind the somatics. Whilst the ongoing research into fascia seems to be thriving, this paper proposes that the potential significance of this new knowledge for dance and somatic practice suggests a viable line of inquiry.