



THE KEEPER, THOUGHTS

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& Performer



Picture by Simon K. Allen

I've always been fascinated by emotions, the way they can come in and sweep you away, the way they can hold you in some places. They can be so powerful, in the most beautiful but also, sometimes, in the most frightening way. So powerful that you can't move, or breath or think. We all have a different relationship to our emotions, but one thing is for sure, we all experience them, and we all have to deal with them. When I was growing up, we didn't really talk about emotion, even less about mental health. It's amazing to witness the progress society has done in this area, but there's still a long way to go to reduce the stigma that's still attached to the subject.

For the past two and a half years, I've been working on the 'Shopkeeper Project' – which was first meant to be a performance, and has now turned into a short film called 'The Keeper' – exploring the topic of depression through dance and movement.

On this journey, I've had some amazing conversations with incredibly generous people who shared their experiences and thoughts. These exchanges reinforced my idea that the more you talk, the more you normalise these feelings, the less daunting they become.

Through my research, I've also come across a lot of amazing authors, but one that had a particular impact is Dr. Brené Brown – if you don't know her, you are in for a treat! Her latest book *Atlas of the Heart* has given me so much food for thoughts on how we talk about emotions and what language we use. As someone that lives and works in a second language that rocked my boat a bit when she quoted L. Wittgenstein: "*The limits of my language is the limits of my world*" and said: "*Language shows us that naming an experience doesn't give the experience more power, it gives us the power of understanding and meaning*".

Through my practice, I want to explore how our bodies can connect with our emotions, how they can help us recognise and process emotions, how we can use this in dance classes and eventually to create powerful choreographic work that connect people.