

# SMUIN | 30

CONTEMPORARY BALLET  
CELIA FUSHILLE / ARTISTIC DIRECTOR  
YEARS

## BROKEN OPEN

Choreography by Amy Seiwert  
Premiere on September 18, 2015



Susan Roemer in costume at the premiere of Broken Open

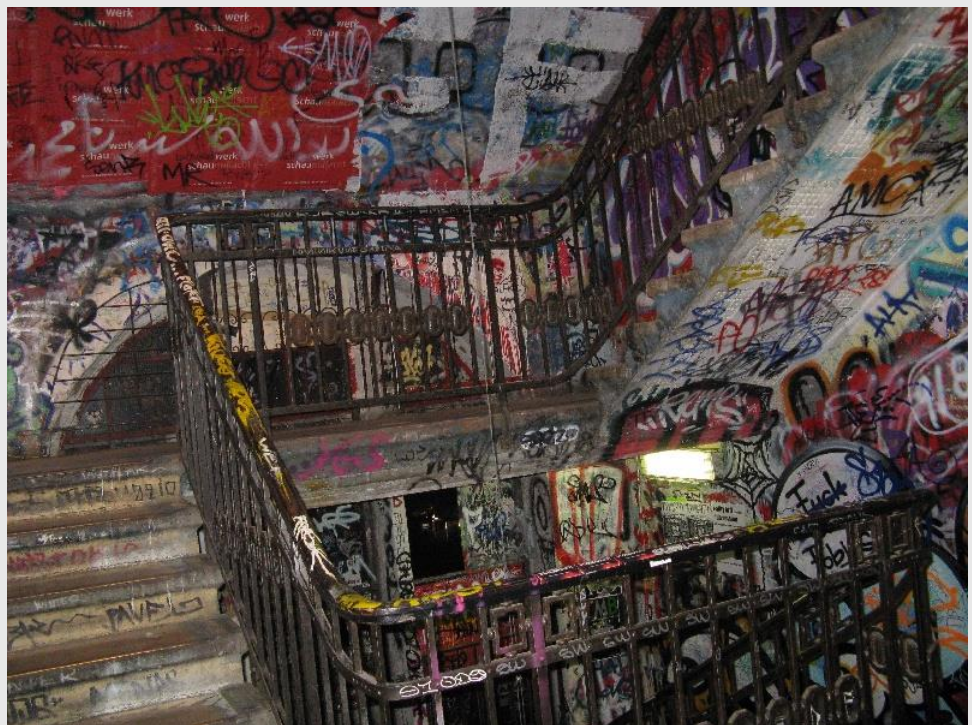


Photo of Kunsthaus Tacheles. Image off Wikipedia.

Fun fact: Why Sue's butt says "Vorsicht"

"Vorsicht" translates as caution. If you're watching *Broken Open* and get distracted by "why vorsicht?" Here you go.

The creation process for *Broken Open* started with a very clear intention—an exploration of how, sometimes, absolute beauty can be born from a scar. One inspiration was a photo of a woman who had had a severe medical surgery and turned the scar into a fantastic tattoo. Love or hate tattoos, that this woman took her scarring and turned it into her own personal statement of beauty is something I applaud.

Another inspiration came from the city of Berlin, where I had the good fortune to spend a couple of weeks back in 2009. On a warm spring day I stumbled across Kunsthaus Tacheles, a building originally slated for demolition by the GDR. Artists had taken over the site by squatting there after the Berlin Wall came down. I spent hours in the garden reading and writing in my journal, wondering how someone was able to create graffiti murals five stories tall. I was amazed at the large-scale beauty created by the artists. It wasn't pretty, but it was absolutely beautiful. How a place with such a horrid history (the building housed a Nazi prison at one point) became a vibrant hub for beauty and expression. I was amazed at how a wound so deep healed over, and something beautiful came from that scar.

Early on in the process, designer Sandra Woodall mentioned graffiti for the costumes. This was totally by coincidence, as she didn't know of the Berlin inspiration. I sent her images of murals I had taken in the city. In her search for fabric she found a print that must have been inspired by the same wall. She then had them painted over so the scale would read from stage.

I am sad to say the Kunsthaus Tacheles was closed in September of 2012. I have to wonder if any of the murals were preserved. And I have to thank those artists who inspired me with the beauty they created.

- Amy Seiwert

*This was originally published as a blog on Amy Seiwert's Imagery website in 2015.*



Company Artists Terez Dean Orr and Mengjun Chen in *Broken Open*. Photo by Chris Hardy.