

A DEAD HORSE

A NEW DANCE–THEATER WORK BY BOBBI JENE SMITH AND OR SCHRAIBER

ARTIST STATEMENT

A Dead Horse is an evening-length dance-theater work for six male-identifying dancers, a cellist, and a percussionist.

There is a question we keep returning to: why do we continue repeating structures of violence, control, and domination even when we already know where they lead?

The phrase “beating a dead horse” became an important entry point for us. It speaks to something that is already exhausted, already over, unable to move, and yet we keep returning to it. We rehash the same argument. We stay attached to the same patterns. We try to bring something back to life even when we know it may no longer serve us.

We are curious to look at how men perform for one another and how those performances begin to break down. How a group organizes itself through care, competition, obedience, repetition, failure, tenderness, domination, and the constant negotiation between power and vulnerability.

As in all of our work, live music is integral. The cellist and percussionist are not accompanying the choreography; they are inside the same system. Rhythm, silence, impact, and musical tension become part of the dramaturgy. The physical and sonic worlds develop together and continually affect one another.

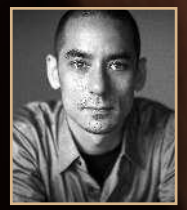
We want to confront our inherent relationship to violence, community, and forgiveness. If the inherited premise is that violence is the only way forward, can that perspective be changed? Can a group recognize the structure it is trapped inside and behave differently? Or do we inevitably return to the same rituals?

TEAM & PERFORMERS



Bobbi Jene Smith

Director. Former Batsheva Dance Company; choreographer/director working across dance, theatre, opera, and film.



Andy Akiho

Composer. Pulitzer Prize finalist and seven-time Grammy-nominated composer;



Dana Osborne

Longtime designer at the Stratford Festival, with recent dance work for New York City Ballet and the National Ballet of Canada.



John Torres

Light Designer. working across dance, theatre, opera, music, and fashion; collaborators include Robert Wilson, Lucinda Childs, Solange Knowles, and the Paris Opera Ballet.



Or Schraiber

Director / Dancer. Former Batsheva Dance Company; choreographer/director working across dance, theatre, opera, and film.



Alexander Bozinoff

Dancer. Former Stuttgart Ballet and Staatstheater Nürnberg; joined Royal Danish Ballet in 2011 and became principal in 2022.



Ido Toledano

Dancer and choreographer. Former Batsheva Ensemble and Dresden Frankfurt Dance Company; Freelance dancer based in Germany.



Jeremy Coachman

Dancer. Former Les Ballets Jazz de Montréal and L.A. Dance Project. Freelance dancer based in Montreal.



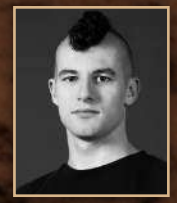
Coleman Itzkoff

Cellist and performer. Founding member of AMOC and core member of Ruckus and Twelfth Night;



Johnny Allen

Percussionist. Founding Core Member of AMOC and member of Sandbox Percussion; Based in Brooklyn.



Loup Marcault-Derouard

Dancer and choreographer. Paris Opera Ballet since 2018; trained at the Paris Opera Ballet School.



Mermoz Melchior

Dancer. Trained with Compagnie Grenade and Ballet Junior de Genève, Former Batsheva Dance Company; Freelance dancer based in Paris.

SCENOGRAPHY

The stage is ordered like a horse ring: a three-sided wooden border, soil underfoot, and an open gate as the only entrance into the arena.

The fence acts less as architecture than as a frame: it creates rules, inside/outside, perimeter, center, and a place of observation.

The vending machine remains as a modern intrusion — an object of appetite, and absurd interruption.

The riding ring is the frame for this world. It is a place built around training, discipline, repetition, command, spectacle, and control.

We like that it can feel at once as a sports arena, a rehearsal space, a stable, and a social laboratory. Inside it, the performers are constantly negotiating the rules of the space and the rules they have inherited from one another.

Set design: Bobbi Jene Smith & Or Schraiber

SCENIC DESIGN ELEMENTS

SOIL FLOOR

A full dirt/peat surface becomes the acoustic and visual ground of the work. Footprints, weight, dragging, and exhaustion remain visible.

WOODEN RINK

Three-sided dark wood fence with an outward-opening gate. The fence should break down into modular sections for touring and load-in.

OBJECTS

A fabricated dead horse; older vending machine; 6 Wooden Chairs, Percussion and Cello stations. Objects are placed as dramaturgical anchors rather than décor.



The scenography is conceived as a flexible, adaptable environment that can be reconfigured for black box spaces, outdoor venues, and traditional proscenium theaters while preserving the work's essential spatial and visual language.

VIBES & LINKS

Selected movement and visual references
all from the repertoire of Bobbi Jene Smith & Or Schraiber

Men Trio — *For Glass*

Lamentatio Duet — *Broken Theater*

Men Duet — *Waiting Places*

Chair & Folk Map — *Procession*

Men Quartet — *Quartet for Five*

Violence Duets — *Satyagraha*

Prayers — *Yemen Blues*

Men Line — *I cannot love without trembling*

Men Trio — *I cannot love without trembling*

Men Unison — *For Glass*

Men Duet — *Obsidian*

Table Duet — *Quartet for Five*

Schubert Trio — *Seven Scenes*

Eddie's Solo — *Obsidian*

Bar Scene — *Aviva*

Metamorphose — *Yemen Blues*

TIMELINE



Summer of 2027	København Danser	Development weeks in Copenhagen.
Fall of 2027	Copenhagen	World premiere.
Touring	Available from august 2027	2027/2028 or 2028/2029 seasons. Tour conversations are currently in development with Berlin, Torino, and Sofia.

Bobbi Jene Smith & Or Schraiber

Director-Choreographers whose collaborative work spans dance, opera, theater, and film.

Partners both inside and outside the studio, they have directed and choreographed original works for companies including the Paris Opera Ballet, San Francisco Ballet, GöteborgsOperans Danskompani, National Ballet of Canada, Martha Graham Dance Company, Royal Danish Ballet, Theater Basel, Ballet BC, Batsheva Ensemble, and L.A. Dance Project, among others.

Their theater work includes choreography for *Danny and the Deep Blue Sea* at the Lucille Lortel Theatre in New York; *Thelma and Louise: The Musical* at the Young Vic in London; and *Our Class* at BAM in Brooklyn. Their film choreography includes *The Bride!; Waiting Places; Aviva; The Way of the Wind; Annihilation.*

Smith and Schraiber directed and choreographed the 2026 production of Philip Glass's *Satyagraha* at the Paris Opera.

They are founding members of the American Modern Opera Company and Resident Choreographers at Ballet BC.



Representation

PILOT MGMT — Garen Scribner
garen@pilotmgmt.org

PARTNERS

KØBENHAVN DANSER

COMMISSIONER & PRODUCER

København Danser was established in 2020 with a mission to expand and develop dance as a performing art-form in Denmark, for both audiences and the dance community. Its work brings dance of the highest caliber to Denmark, guided by social relevance and artistic quality.

For A Dead Horse, København Danser serves as commissioner and lead producer, supporting the development and premiere of the work in Copenhagen.

CONTACTS

Ulrik Birkkjær
Artistic Director
ulrik@kbhdanser.dk

Thomas Mieth
Festival Director
mieth@kbhdanser.dk

København Danser
hello@kbhdanser.dk



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THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.