

Anna Halprin Biography 1920-2021

"Transforming Life Through Dance"

Anna's grandparents were Lithuanian immigrants who fled Eastern Europe at the turn of the century.

As a pioneer of Post Modern Dance, Anna was interested in the importance of personal creativity, the collaborative process and the creation of an art of everyday life.

A diagnosis of cancer at the age of 50 shifted her focus. Investigating and healing her own disease led to the evolution of the "Life/Art Process" and inspired workshops dedicated to therapeutic, transformational and psychological needs using tools of the body, movement, dialogue, voice, drawing, improvisation, performance and reflection, she was able to guide others to explore themselves and use art as a therapy to heal themselves. As an early leader in the expressive arts healing movement she developed training in the process at the Tamalpa Institute which she cofounded with her daughter Daria.

Her use of dance as her compass through the stages of life from youth into old age and the stages of the profession from dancer, choreographer, teacher, performance theorist, community leader, healer, wife, mother, cancer survivor, and ultimately dancing Elder -- has proved inspirational to generations of dancers, teachers, healthcare providers, and expressive art therapists.

Through her performing and teaching which she continues in her 90s, Halprin created the groundwork for redefinition of American modern dance as a contemporary ritual and a forum for the artist as a morally, psychologically and socially engaged individual.

Halprin is an early pioneer in the expressive arts healing movement. She has led countless collaborative dance programs with terminally ill patients, long committed to a belief in the connection between movement and the healing power of dance.

Halprin has also investigated numerous social issues through dance and through theatrical innovations. Her transformative dance work has given voice to forgotten groups, people of color, the aged and the terminally ill.

Anna was awarded for her lifetime achievement as a dancer by both The Association of Theater Movement Educators in 2005 and by the Samuel H. Scripps/American Dance Festival in 1997.