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Who are Adam McKinney and Daniel Banks? Dialogue and Healing through the arts

For the last two months, we have had the great honor to host at Kibbutz Hazorea, Adam McKinney and Daniel Banks, both Jewish Americans who, in their artwork, also carry a message that is aimed to many different communities in the world. This is not their first visit to Israel. They both have family and friends here.

Adam is a classic dancer and a choreographer. He was a dancer for Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in New York City and Bejart Ballet Lausanne. Dance, for him, is a catalyst for social change. Daniel is a director and choreographer and a significant organizer of Theatre Without Borders. He worked for 15 years as a lecturer at New York University and created numerous projects around the world. Recently their company, called DNAWORKS, has led projects in Indonesia and Ghana.

The "DNA" in their company's name is known to us from the world of genetics, which is the construct of the component of cells. The artists use the term to emphasize one of the many connections between every human being. This is also the first letters of their name. Their work, which also includes the way they view the world, are seen by Adam and Daniel as an opportunity to develop the dialogue of artistic expression with its emphasis on identity, social class, culture, and heritage. They believe that each human being and community, wherever they are, has the place, the honor, and the uniqueness that is expressed through their art. They believe that this philosophy, in practice, leads to a better and quieter world.

[Lynn Nottage,] the Pulitzer prize winner of 2009, says that the mission of Adam and Daniel to heal the community through art, successfully changing people's lives in the world. It is possible to say that Daniel and Adam are cultural ambassadors. Their work is in many different places all over the world. They work in many countries and are active in many universities across the globe.

The two received a grant from the American Embassy in Tel Aviv to direct dance and theatre workshops for Arabs and Jews. They worked in Akko, Jaffa, Nazareth, etc. They also worked with two dancers who were injured at the terrorist attack that occurred at "Bar Noar" in Tel Aviv, and have a workshop in Schunat Hatikvah. They met with The Kibbutz Contemporary Dance Company and visited the Susan Dellar Centre for Dance and Theatre where they both were members of the 2009 International Exposure Festival. Adam and Daniel met with the CEO of the Cameri Theatre, Noam Semel, and they are planning to collaborate with the theatre.

The two arrived in Israel primarily to work with the Ethiopian dance group, Beta Dance Troupe. The relations with them started in 2002 while the dance group toured the US. They both became interested in the dance group as well as their integration in Israel. During their stay in Israel, the artists created the dance called "What Are We Saying?/?□□□ □□□ □□ that was created with the dancers of Beta Dance Troupe. This process ripens to an individual strong statement of "□□□□ the dancers with their movement language that is unique to the Ethiopian communities.

This year, Beta Dance Troupe went as the representatives of the Ministry of Foreign affairs to tours in Ecuador and Ethiopia. This is a happy opportunity to say that Beta Dance Troupe expanded and a vice president to the creator and CEO of the troupe Ruth Eshel was nominated. Her name is Meeka Yaari. Congratulations, Meeka, we wish you success.

To Daniel and Adam, who were hosted at Dorit and Meeka Yaari, this is the first occurrence with a kibbutz. They enjoy and rave about the warm hospitality, the surrounding nature, the quiet, the environment, the hiking in the woods (where they find a place for Yoga), and from the breakfasts that they never knew before (real goat yogurt!). "Our idea," says Daniel, "is to create a kind of community of all different artists from all over the world to work together. This idea existed before we got to Israel but here it got reinforced". Maybe what countries, leaders, and rulers were not able to achieve, the art, in its unique way, will be able to cross borders, barriers, countries and cultures. Lu Yehi, Hope it will happen