

**■ Jodi Falk and Elaine Caxton****██████████ (Whispering Walls)****Jacksons Lane, London, May 1996**

**T**his show combined dance and text to provide a disturbing but ultimately liberating portrait of Helene von Druskovitz, a Viennese society lady who dared to stand up and question the restrictions of a patriarchal society and was rewarded by being incarcerated in an insane asylum. The material had contemporary relevance despite the fact that Helene was born in 1856.

Jodi Falk, dressed in red, stood

centre stage and moved in a simple, slow and earthed way while Elaine Caxton sat at a desk at the side of the stage in front of a video camera which recorded her every facial movement and projected them back to the audience. An exercise in alienation! On either side of the central aisle were a series of chairs covered in spikes which were gradually revealed as the sheets covering them were

removed. Elaine Caxton, meanwhile read from Helene von Druskovitz's writings in a cold and clinical manner which provided a strong contrast to Jodi Falk's warmth. The material included images of mental 'palaces' lit up in states of alcoholism and women going to the altar bleating like sheep.

The video projections were sometimes visually confusing as the audience were challenged

where to look. Overall, however the humanity of the dance won the day and even if the subject matter offered no solutions there was a joy to be experienced in the journey the two performers took together. As a piece of feminist theatre it was inclusive and inspiring.

**Susan Aykroyd**