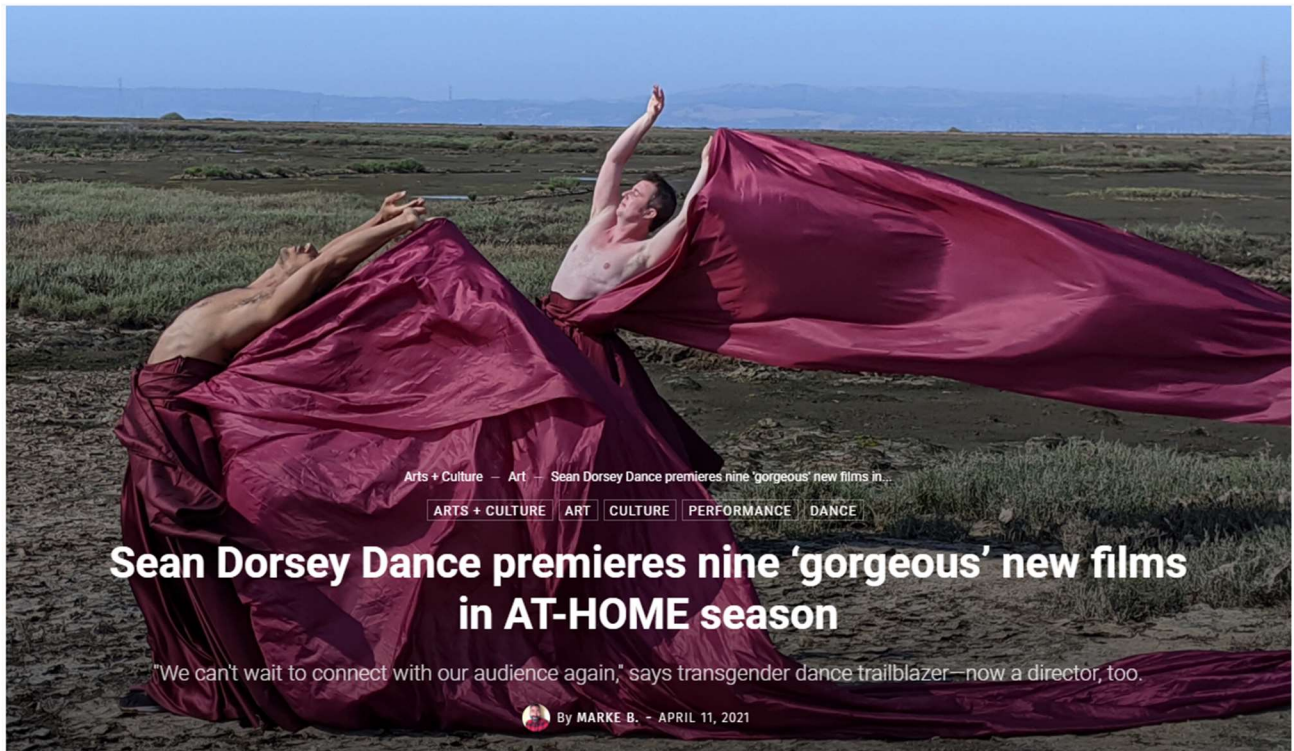


Monday, April 12, 2021



Arts + Culture — Art — Sean Dorsey Dance premieres nine 'gorgeous' new films in...

ARTS + CULTURE ART CULTURE PERFORMANCE DANCE

Sean Dorsey Dance premieres nine 'gorgeous' new films in AT-HOME season

"We can't wait to connect with our audience again," says transgender dance trailblazer—now a director, too.

By MARKE B. — APRIL 11, 2021

Raúl Torres-Banilla and Sean Dorsey in a sneak peek of 'The Art of Dreaming.' Photo by Shawna Virago

Transgender dance hero [Sean Dorsey](#) was just on the cusp of launching his company's 2020 annual home season last April when the heartbreaking decision had to be made to cancel it all. Of course, that setback barely deterred the indefatigable Dorsey from continuing to present thought-provoking and stunning expressions for people of all genders, origins, and bodies—his production company [Fresh Meat Productions put on its annual festival two months later](#), full of archival clips and a sense of determination about the future. (It was an election year, remember that?)

Now, Sean Dorsey Dance is back with "[AT-HOME Season](#)" (April 16-18), showcasing nine new dance films from the company, and kicking off an amazing-sounding project, *The Lost Art of Dreaming*. (Like most arts organizations, the longtime company has had to "pivot to video"—and Dorsey sounds excited about debuting as a film director.) I spoke with Dorsey about the season, the project, and the capital-F Future.

48HILLS *It was so crushing when last season's presentation had to be canceled. What can we expect from the 2021 AT-HOME season, and what are you particularly excited about?*

SEAN DORSEY We've been working toward this for an entire year: Our AT-HOME Season is an online streaming event that features the world premiere of nine gorgeous dance films, a special message from me, and exclusive sneak-peeks of our new project [*The Lost Art of Dreaming*](#).

It is absolutely a labor of love, which is why we are offering it for free! (But people need to register in advance to get a ticket the link to watch.) Since shelter-in-place hit last year, me and my dancers have been meeting on Zoom three or four days a week, every week.

During our Zoom rehearsals, we take turns giving class and leading workouts and conditioning—being a dancer during lockdown is no joke! We also do movement research and creation. We planned and filmed a series of nine dance films. We filmed in the most spectacular locations: on barren rock, hillsides, at the ocean's edge and across vast wetlands.

I'm so excited to premiere these dance films: they're our first movement studies for *The Lost Art of Dreaming*, and it was my first foray into directing and editing! We can't wait to connect with our audiences again.



Nol Simonse and Will Woodward in another 'Lost Art of Dreaming' sneak peak. Photo by Lydia Daniller

48HILLS *Regarding The Lost Art of Dreaming—the advance materials say the project is about “investigating and imagining expansive Futures for our communities.” Can you tell me a little bit about the ideas behind it all?*

SEAN DORSEY [The Lost Art of Dreaming](#) is a multi-year, multi-media, multi-disciplinary project-slash-adventure that embraces the declaration "DREAMING IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT."

It's a powerful question: How do you imagine your Future in a world that doesn't even expect you to have one? When you have never been allowed to dream?

We start with the bold assumptions that joy, love, liberation, freedom, and dreaming are our birthrights. Starting from there, what becomes possible? How do we move and dance? How are we in relationship and in community? How can we support each other, how can we lift each other up as trans, queer, BIPOC, disabled, migrant communities in the pursuit of this?

48HILLS *Can you tell me a little bit more about what activities The Lost Art Of Dreaming involves, and who is involved?*

SEAN DORSEY *The Lost Art of Dreaming* will host a veritable cornucopia of activities over the next few years:

First, we're creating a series of [dance films](#) that reveals our movement research into the themes of trans and queer Futures. We bring our bodies outside, in order to be in relationship with the earth, the sky, the sun and the water. (I consider these relationships to be the key nourishing connections that will fuel our expansive Futures... not robots and spaceships.)

In Spring 2022, we'll perform the world premiere of *The Lost Art of Dreaming* (a full-evening dance-theater production), before launching a 10+ city tour across the US and abroad.

But before that, this Summer we're launching [a whole constellation of free, online, interactive events and activities](#) including: "The Dictionary Of Joy And Pleasure," "Postcards From The Future" (you can sign up to get these in the mail!), "The Futurist Pledge," and so much more.

I'm incredibly blessed to have the most genius group of collaborators: my dancers Nol Simonse, Will Woodward and Raul Torres-Bonilla; dance film cinematographer Annalise Ophelian and Production Assistant Shawna Virago; magical Costume Designer Tiffany Amundson; composers Alex Kelly, Anomie Belle, Ben Kessler, Frida Ibarra and Grey

Reverend; Technical Director Emily Paulson; and Online Program Team Eric Garcia, StormMiguel Florez, and Gwen Park.



Sean Dorsey. Photo by Lydia Daniller

48HILLS *I see that it was just announced that [Shafer Mazow was appointed Z Space's executive director](#), one of the first transgender EDs of a vital arts space in the country, which is so awesome. Are you feeling hopeful about continued advancement of trans people in the arts in terms of visibility and power?*

SEAN DORSEY I do feel hopeful! I believe so deeply in the power of our communities to rise up and achieve Justice. I love Shafer, and working with him (Z Space is our longtime artistic home) is such a joy. I'm thrilled!

Now please allow me to use this space for a Transgender Service Announcement: *Dear Bay Area theaters and dance centers: you are waaaaaay overdue to change your bloody bathrooms and changing rooms over to be all-gender. Please use the current lockdown to FIX THIS! There is no excuse for you to keep hand-wringing, dilly-dallying and delaying. Time's up—fix it NOW. It costs nothing more than a piece of paper saying "ALL-GENDER BATHROOM" and some education of your staff, board, and facility staff.*

48HILLS *Finally, how has the pandemic affected or informed your movement and gestural language? Isolation and world events (not to mention the Trump mess) seem to weigh so heavily on our bodies, have you found new ways of expression through this at all?*

SEAN DORSEY Yes! It is exactly the weight of all of that Awful that inspired this new project. So many people are enduring so much daily harm—whether due to family separation, state violence against Black people, criminalization of health care for trans youth, unbridled and emboldened white supremacy, hate crimes against Asian American communities, or a deadly pandemic in a nation that fails to provide healthcare for its residents.

To love each other and rise up out of and above all this harm demands imagination. The activist, the artist ... that's our role: imagining a better Future.

It's been liberating to work with these themes to inspire our movement, our expression, our dancing. *The Lost Art of Dreaming* invites us all into that role, into this expansive dreaming.

Sean Dorsey Dance's AT-HOME Season runs April 16-18 online. [More info here.](#)