

NWTHEATRE

Seattle-Area Performance & Art

May 7, 2022

Sean Dorsey Dance film series

Short films

Sean Dorsey; USA



Raúl Torres-Bonilla and Sean Dorsey in 'Toward', a dance film by Sean Dorsey

This lovely series of dance films tells a palpable story: resisting, claiming a place, building something, and freedom in joy.

Is that the story they had in mind to tell? I don't know, it's modern dance — interpret how you will. But it's an enjoyable collection, particularly as a sequence in this order. It's a pleasant, efficient crescendo of freedom.

The first three films — *Toward*, *Place/Portal*, and *At Water's Edge* — feel like different movements of the same story.

Toward brings lots of wind noise (interspersed with disorienting silence) and a



Sean Dorsey Dance dancers in 'Seek/After,' a dance film by Sean Dorsey

feeling of resistance, in bleak surroundings — dust, field, low hearty plants. Midway through, slow piano notes, like a slow awakening, lead into some peace before the word “possible” appears.

Place/Portal, a solo by Dorsey, continues a story of forward motion, but feels more contemplative and open to slowing down. *At Water's Edge* is on firmer footing; it starts from the mood of awakening, claiming a place; it feels more liberated, playful; moving fast around but not going anywhere. In all three, costumes by Tiffany Amundson are an asset.

There's something liberating about watching a bare-chested trans man dance freely in a flowing parachute of a gown. The music, by Ben Kessler (*Toward*) and Anomie Belle (*Place/Portal* and *At Water's Edge*), is likewise crucial to the storytelling.

The last of the four films, *Seek/After*, is a definite shift in energy; a different movement and a different story. Where the others are some level of seeking, this one is pure play. Different musical energy (by Frida Ibarra)

sweeps in, with a more flowy modern dance style and occasionally laughable antics. They may be back in a dusty field, in dark gray clothes and masks, but there's a joy to this one.

Dancers: Sean Dorsey (all), Nol Simonse (*At Water's Edge*, *Seek/After*), Raúl Torres-Bonilla (*Toward*, *Seek/Find*), Will Woodward (*Seek/Find*).

Mood: Joy

How to watch: [Virtually](#) – TransLations Seattle Film Festival
Trans Joy shorts (through 5/8)

(Read NWT's 2019 interview feature with choreographer Sean Dorsey, ahead of his company's Velocity Dance Center performances, [here](#).)