

48hills

Independent San Francisco news + culture

‘The Lost Art of Dreaming’: Power of queer-trans reverie, now in real life

By MARKE B. - November 17, 2022

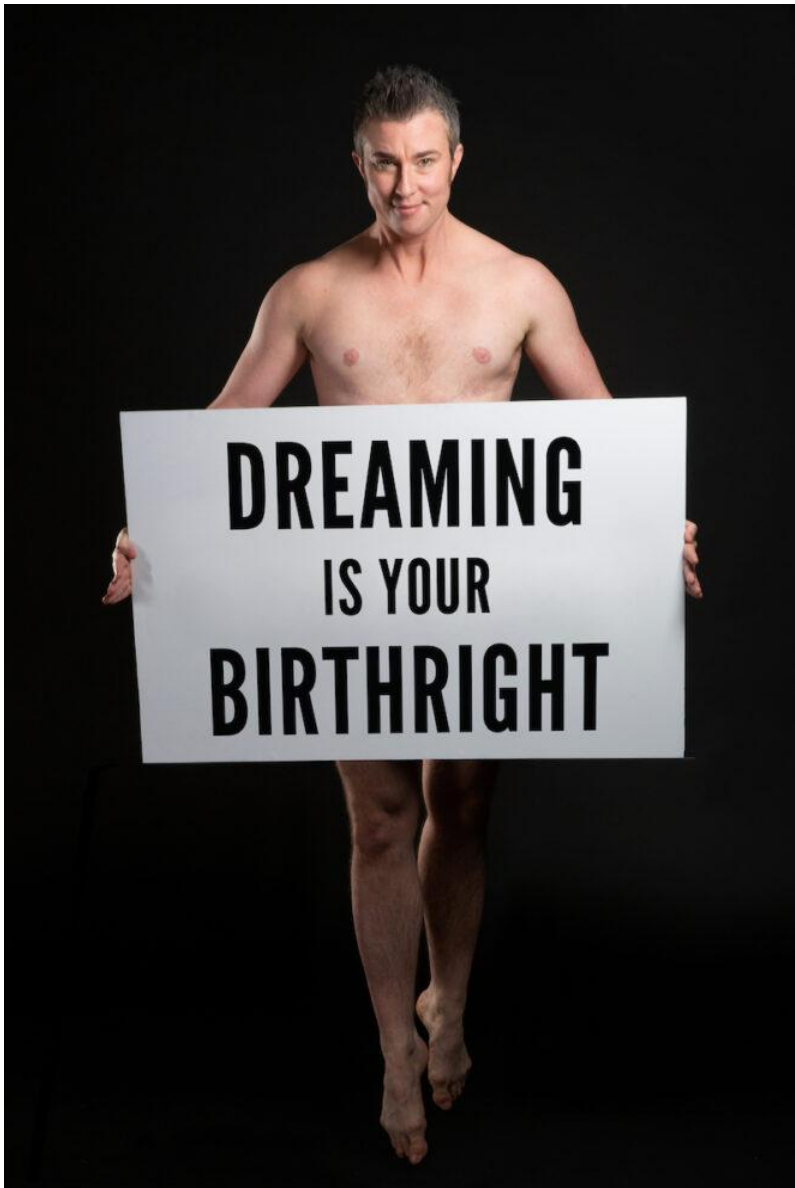


Brandon Graham of Sean Dorsey Dance. Photo by Lydia Daniller

‘We need expansive imagination, now more than ever’ says Sean Dorsey

of his dance troupe's latest, finally on stage.

“We are so glad you’re here. You are precious and irreplaceable, and YOU have an important place on this planet and in the Future.” This fabulous affirmation greets visitors to [Sean Dorsey Dance’s “Lost Art of Dreaming” page](#), and it could stand as motivation for the project itself (Fri/18-Sun/20 at Z Space), which has pushed forward in several iterations through the pandemic.



Now, the evening of “full-throttle dance, intimate storytelling, intricate costuming and exquisite queer partnering” is finally making it live to the stage—but anyone who knows transgender dance trailblazer Dorsey knows that no pesky COVID was going to restrict their creative output. The Lost Art of Dreaming manifested last year as a series of acclaimed short dance films, and now includes an incantatory spell, a “Dictionary of Joy and Pleasure,” a “Futurist Pledge,” and a vibrant “Postcards from the Future” series of artworks.

It’s all in the service of Dorsey’s motto for the project, “Dreaming Is Your Birthright,” which aims to restore and confirm the act of envisioning a queer-trans future for oneself in the face of continued oppression (if not [outright genocidal threats](#)), as well as imagining a communal utopia full of love and joy. I asked Dorsey about the

power, evolution, and intention of “The Lost Art of Dreaming.”

Sean Dorsey. Photo by Lydia Daniller

48 HILLS *Last year “The Lost Art of Dreaming” consisted of short films, this year it’s live on stage—can you tell me about the evolution of the project?*

SEAN DORSEY We have been working on this project for over two years now, and it feels absolutely exquisite to be at this point: ready for live audiences, onstage! Costumes! Lights! Action!

All along, we've been doing movement research, writing, dreaming, and planning. First, we manifested our embodiment through dance films, which are now screening at festivals around the world. We recently won an award for one of our films in Australia!

And now being onstage: it's so powerful being inside this work, which lifts up gender-nonconforming, queer and trans power, vision, intentionality, aesthetics, and DREAMING.

For the last year we've been hard at work several days per week in the rehearsal studio, building out this work for the stage. Lemme tell you, you build up some serious cardio stamina dancing full-throttle wearing a KN95 mask for two years! (Our audiences will wear KN95 masks and now finally, we will dance unmasked.)



Sean Dorsey Dance. Photo by Lydia Daniller

48H *How does it feel to be back live?*

SD I feel elated. I feel profoundly, richly blessed to be dancing with my brilliant, brilliant collaborators and company members. Returning to in-person dance and touch and breath, sharing that spine-tingling in-person audience experience is something I will never, never take for granted again.

48H *What are some of the themes of “The Lost Art of Dreaming” that you feel will really connect with people right now?*

SD Most of us queer and trans folks received cultural messaging from an early age that we weren’t allowed to dream, and that we couldn’t necessarily even expect to make it to old age. Our dream engines have been systematically shut down by capitalism, white supremacy, ableism, trans-misogyny, anti-Blackness, you name it.

We need expansive imagination, now more than ever. We need liberatory and gender-expansive embodiment, now more than ever. We need hope, we need beauty, we need rage, we need sass and we need each other. That is what this show is all about. And we cannot wait to share this with you.

—

THE LOST ART OF DREAMING

Fri/18-Sun/20 at Z Space, SF. [More info here.](#)