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San Francisco Choreographer Sean Dorsey Wins Emmy Award

In a win for transgender visibility and transgender excellence, San Francisco choreographer Sean Dorsey was awarded an Emmy Award for his work on the short film, *Sean Dorsey Dance: Dreaming Trans and Queer Futures*.

Produced by KQED and directed by Lindsay Gauthier, this 10-minute short is a moving, visually-stunning profile of Dorsey and his two decades of Bay Area trans and queer artistry and activism. Part dance film and part documentary, the piece follows Dorsey and his company (Sean Dorsey Dance) as they dance in outdoor locations all over San Francisco.

While the film is a gorgeous testament to Dorsey’s trailblazing work as a transgender choreographer, it’s also a love letter to San Francisco as an important site of trans history, resistance, and community. Archival footage of early trans and queer activists provides a window onto the legacy on which Dorsey is building.



Director Lindsay Gauthier (left) and Choreographer Sean Dorsey (right) celebrate their Emmy win.

The team who was nominated and awarded includes Lindsay Gauthier (Director), Kelly Whalen and Masha Pershay (Producers), Elie M. Khadra (Director of Photography), and Sean Dorsey (Choreographer).

Sean Dorsey Dance: Dreaming Trans and Queer Futures was created for KQED’s series *If Cities Could Dance*. The piece won the Emmy for “Arts/Entertainment-News” at the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences 52nd Annual Northern California Area Emmy Awards and Gala, held June 3 at the Hilton San Francisco Union Square.

Director Lindsay Gauthier shares, “When I first saw Sean’s work in 2012, it was transformative. It solidified in my mind the power of story to create empathy and compassion in the world. I knew then that I wanted to someday make a film with Sean. So, when KQED asked me, it was an immediate yes. I was so honored to tell Sean’s story. I hope that it is a beacon of light to whoever needs it right now, and that it plants seeds of compassion and empathy in every person it touches, just as Sean’s work has always done for me.”

“This is something I never ever dreamed of!” says Dorsey, “Being awarded an Emmy is an incredible affirmation of my work, and a victory for trans visibility at this time of so many attacks on our community. I am so grateful to the entire team for their brilliant and loving work on this project.”

Sean Dorsey Dance: Dreaming Trans and Queer Futures is currently traveling the globe as it screens at international film festivals; Bay Area audiences can watch for it Friday, June 23, at the Castro Theater (11 am), as part of this year’s Frameline Film Festival (<https://tinyurl.com/4j6zvdtd>). Other

screenings include festivals in India, Spain, Italy, France, and Australia.

Senior Producer Kelly Whalen enthuses, “This was one of the most cinematic and beautifully crafted pieces in the five seasons of this series I’ve senior produced. I remember being on pre-production calls and how Sean’s creativity and expansive thinking was so infectious. So, we pulled out all the stops. Drone cinematography, ambitious and epic locations new to even San Franciscans, wardrobe. We all put a lot of time, care, and trust into the process, and I couldn’t be more proud.”

Sean Dorsey Dance: Dreaming Trans and Queer Futures is also viewable on KQED’s website, and features closed-captions and audio-description (<https://tinyurl.com/3mk3d3cx>).

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