

'The Lost Art of Dreaming' - Sean Dorsey and company dance their way into Z Space

by David-Elijah Nahmod | Tuesday September 19, 2023



Sean Dorsey's 'The Lost Art of Dreaming' (photo: Kegan Marling)

Sean Dorsey has been around the world. "The Lost Art of Dreaming," the dance piece he created and choreographed, was performed in San Francisco last fall. He has since taken the show on a 10-city tour to cities including Atlanta, Georgia and Stockholm, Sweden. Now, he brings the show back to San Francisco due to the enormous amount of positive feedback he got from local audiences. "The Lost Art of Dreaming" will perform at Z Space from September 29-October 1.

Dorsey is a trans masculine person, and all his dances are either queer, non-binary, gender expansive, Two-Spirit and/or trans. These identities very much play into the show's title.

"As queer and trans folks, we don't grow up being told we have a right to dream about our futures," Dorsey said in an interview with the Bay Area Reporter. "And especially at this brutal moment in America —well, when has it not been a brutal moment— permission to dream and feel joy is hard to come by. I created this show as a love letter to longing and our deepest dreams. It's a deep dive into possibility, joy, pleasure, and expansive futures."

Dorsey feels that it's important to be out and visible given the current political climate. He absolutely loves being trans.

"Trans folks have always existed and thrived, and we always will," he said. "No amount of hate can stop us. I've been out and vocal as a trans choreographer for the last 20+ years, and I'm proud to have impacted the Bay Area and the national landscape for trans artists. I receive a lot of letters, emails and DMs that this show is deeply feeding people's hearts right now."

Dorsey recently had a major brush with fame. Over the past year he won an Emmy Award for a short film produced by KQED called "Sean Dorsey Dance: Dreaming Trans and Queer Futures." The film premiered as part of the station's "If Cities Could Dance" series and has screened at more than twenty film festivals around the world.

"I still cannot believe I have an Emmy statuette in my house," Dorsey said.

Dance is not the only kind of performance that Dorsey has done. He grew up doing theater and cites comedy legend Carol Burnett as an early influence. He sings in "The Lost Art of Dreaming." He composed two songs for the sound score, and he sings both onstage and in the recorded soundtrack. But dance remains his great love.

"I am in love with the power of the body in motion," he said. "And I believe in the power of the moving body to create change, both inside of us all, and in the larger culture. Dance is the most visceral, deeply moving thing I know. Creating dances that bring trans and queer bodies, voices and aesthetics to the stage and around the world is my calling and a profound blessing in my life."

Dorsey promises that those who attend "The Lost Art of Dreaming" will be treated to stunningly gorgeous dance and exquisite queer partnering. There will be intricate and couture costuming and queer/trans storytelling. There will also be a lobby reception after the performances during which the audience is treated to "Postcards From the Future" and "The Futurist's Pledge." These are original artworks commissioned especially for the show. And he couldn't be happier to be bringing it all to Z Space.

"Z Space is my artistic home and has been for a long time," he said. "It's an absolutely gorgeous space to perform and to see dance. They have been trans-supportive for so long and have all gender bathrooms. They are family to us."

Sean Dorsey Dance's 'The Lost Art of Dreaming,' Friday and Saturday, September 29 and 30 at 7:30pm, Sunday October 1 at 2pm (Sunday with ASL interpretation). Z Space, 450 Florida Street, \$15-\$50, sliding scale. www.zspace.org www.seandorseydance.com

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