Socially Conscious Choreography

Joya Powell

This movement session will address ways in which to explore choreography of a sociocultural/sociopolitical nature through research, movement exercises, theater games, and personal reflection. It will focus on tools related to the art of creating and crafting socially conscious choreography in an engaging and approachable fashion. The facilitator will lead participants through some best practices for engaging in this subject matter, share processes in honing tactics through trial and error, discuss specific experiences and outcomes of exploring socially conscious choreography as both choreographer and performer, as well as expand the dialogue to the participants giving them the space to brainstorm for ways in which to include sociocultural/sociopolitical topics in their practice of dance making and dance curriculum. Participants will be encouraged to continually discuss and reflect on their experience throughout the process, and by the end of their experience they will leave with the shared tools of the facilitator, their own tools, as well as their own short choreographic sketch or phrase that encompasses the sociocultural topic of their choice. Interested participants will get the chance to share their choreographic sketch with the rest of the Festival in the lobby area either during the lunch break or after the last session before the dinner break.

This session will look to inspire other choreographers and dance educators to discuss local, national and international issues both past and present through the medium of dance. By creating a safe space to explore our social and political beliefs we are able to make profound connections between our understanding of ourselves, our immediate surroundings and our global community. The creative process becomes both interdisciplinary and introspective. By creating a nexus with our audiences we engage an educated and socially active body politic, and elucidate the tremendous importance of utilizing dance as a conduit of change.

Biography: Joya Powell received her MA in Dance Education from NYU, and her BA in Latin American Studies and Creative Writing from Columbia University. She is an Adjunct Lecturer at The Center for Dance, Movement and Somatic Learning at SUNY Stony Brook. Her choreography has appeared in venues such as SummerStage, York University, The Riverside Theatre, Dixon Place, Casa del Prado Theatre, and Montgomery College. She has taught internationally in Brazil and Puerto Rico. As Artistic Director/Choreographer of Movement of the People Dance Company she is dedicated to addressing social issues through dance, connecting cultures and engaging underserved communities.