

Artist Statement

I am inspired by the Black and queer artists who have come before me and utilized performing arts as a tool for liberation.

I love dance because it provides space to both ground my body in reality while also imagining my body's new possibilities. I've witnessed the transformative power of dance, in how it causes me to pause and reflect on my actions towards my body, the people around me and the environment which I am in. I've come to understand dance as uniquely positioned to ignite this multi-layered focus because a dance class for example asks participants to be active within a rapidly changing environment through heightened awareness of their physical body, while dancing with others, and navigating shared space. Dance class takers, audiences, and alike that embody this three-dimensional awareness and then experience this physical transformation may become more familiar with the discomfort of change. Dance has helped me to sit with change and note it as a bridge towards growth. I've taken this skill beyond dance and into my life, allowing myself to decenter my discomfort and recenter heightened awareness, care, and growth.

I am also committed to utilizing dance to investigate the world around me while also actively analyzing dance practices, especially those of concert dance forms. Contemporary dance has a layered lineage, one that is often tied to aesthetics that highlight harm. I push back against these norms and remind contemporary dancers of the aesthetics that encourage care of body/mind/community, diversity as key to a healthy community, resource abundance, and individuality that can support the collective.

I'm invested in dynamic, rigorous and emotional dancing. I pull from training in Modern, Contemporary and diasporic performance practices. I am drawn to practices that provide space for futurism, where many forms of dance, art, creation and performance can align. I want my dancing to be something familiar, something my family and extended community can recognize even within its abstraction.

As a Queer Black Artist I'm honored to dance. To take up space. To state "I am here, and you will not forget me, you will not forget us."

Victoria Lynn Awkward

This artist statement was last updated 2/8/2024, and is subject to grow and change