



Chris Johnson, artistic director of Chelonia Dance, makes work that speaks to the human condition, drawing attention to matters of social justice. Having addressed topics such as the Holocaust, HIV/AIDS, oppression of culture, and world hunger, she creates work that exposes issues in a poignant but accessible way so that all involved, dancers and audience members alike, are inspired to take positive action. Critics have lauded her work as stirring, mesmerizing and ingeniously shifty. Chelonia Dance has presented work around the world. Johnson was awarded First Place for Choreography at the New Prague Dance Festival in Prague, CZ. in 2013. Her work won the Laureate and Grand Prix at the Seventh International Competition: Festival of Choreographic Collectives in Moscow in 2004. Her dance *Wreath of Memories* was performed by special invitation at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. in 2002. She has also presented her work in Tanzania, France, and Belgium as well as at the Krannert Center for the Performing Arts in Urbana, IL, The Ruth Page Center for the Arts in Chicago, and The Union Theater in Madison, WI, and various venues throughout the Midwest and on the West Coast. She has been selected to present work nationally and internationally for Harvest Chicago Contemporary Dance Festival, Going Dutch Festival, Women in Dance Leadership Conference, World Dance Alliance and National Dance Educators Association. Her work has been regularly selected for the gala concerts at the American College Dance Association regional festivals. She performed and choreographed professionally with Dale Scholl's Dance/Art in Sacramento and taught for the Sacramento Ballet. She has performed repertory works of Jose Limon, Doris Humphrey and Alwin Nikolais. She was elected to National Board of Directors of the American College Dance Association representing the North Central Region, in 2006-07.

About Johnson's work

- The Washington Post said...

"The focus of this extraordinary evening... was on those who have chosen to carry on the legacy of the lost... Johnson chose blessedly uncomplicated means to make her point...there were many beautiful moments in the choreography. The image of togetherness and community was stirringly portrayed."

- Hedy Weiss of the Chicago Sun-Times said...

Chris Johnson's "Holding Patterns," set to intriguing music by Romania's Balanescu Quartet, drew on contact improv techniques. It began with a mesmerizing sequence in which one woman inserted herself into a group of four others, setting off a kind of chain reaction of tension and resolution.

- The Sacramento Bee said...

"'Diametrics,' ...was outstanding for the way the choreographer kept shifting the relationships among the four dancers... It's ingeniously shifty."

Chris Johnson, Chelonia Dance Artist Statement

As a choreographer I question the world and reflect the human condition drawing attention to important social issues. I try to create work that illuminates issues in a poignant but accessible way so that all involved, dancers and audience members alike, are touched deeply and inspired to take positive action. Research is an integral part of my process through which the casts and I avidly collaborate with experts on the issues at hand. This collective investigation profoundly influences the choreography and informs the building and completion of the pieces. This collaboration intensifies the connection that the dancers have to the topic, which creates an engaged performance and genuine artistry that has won my work accolades, gala selections and special invitations to perform. My current work explores social identity, institutionalized power structures, and the systemic iterations of privilege and marginalization.