“Ghostly Labor: A Dance Film” explores the history of labor in the US–Mexico borderlands through Tap Dance, Mexican Zapateado, Son Jarocho, Afro Caribbean movement, and live music. This work brings together polyrhythmic movement and an original score to look at the (ongoing) years of systemic exploitation of labor while highlighting the power and joy of collective resistance.

Based on farmworker interviews in California, this excerpt honors the sacred hands that feed us and was filmed on Avila Garcia Farms with support from Ayudando Latinos a Soñar (ALAS), a non-profit advocacy organization for farmworkers in Half Moon Bay, CA. A full-length dance theater production of Ghostly Labor will premiere in 2023.

Performers: Vanessa Sanchez, Sandy Vazquez, Kirsten Millan, Diana Aburto, Micah Sallid, Javier Navarette, Pedro Gomez, Elena de Troya, Tanya Benítez, Sharon Benítez

Interviewees: Rocio Avila Garcia, Serafín Avila Garcia, Don Ramon Sonoqui Martínez, Antonio Castro

A Dance Film by John Jota Leaños and Vanessa Sanchez
Choreography by Vanessa Sanchez
Performed by La Mezcla
Produced by Harry Gregory & Sharon Benítez
Edited by John Jota Leaños & Harry Gregory
Director of Photography: Elie M. Khadra
Sound Engineer: Greg Landau
Song “El Camotal: Manos Que Nos Dan” - Letras by Laura Rebolloso, Arrangement by Javier Navarete and Vanessa Sanchez
Gimbal Operator: Andrew Lew
1st Assistant Camera: Yuito Kimura
Audio Engineer: Jim Choi
Colorist: Robert Arnold
Costumes by Vanessa Sanchez
Production Assistant: Joseline Granados