

KM Dance Project

movement that moves people

2016 press kit

EPK - <http://artistecard.com/KMDanceProject#>!





About KMDP

KM Dance Project aims to present progressive choreography and innovative multi-disciplinary works that lie at the intersection of dance-theatre and social justice.

Serving as a catalyst for a connection to community and cultural history, the work of KMDP delves into the interdisciplinary realm, synthesizing elements of dance and theatre which is staged and designed to move and inspire an audience.

photo credit Louis Moore

Artistic Director, Kesha McKey, established KM Dance Project in 2013 to provide opportunities for emerging choreographers needing a platform to express ideas and issues that affect and impact marginalized communities. KMDP values the importance of creating dance not just for arts sake, but ***movement that moves people***, creativity that can inform people and art that can change someone's perspective. Using art to address existing inequities, racial injustices and the senseless acts of violence plaguing African American communities, KMDP understands that inside the creative process as well as the audience experience exists the possibility of healing, which can potentially be a catalyst for change.



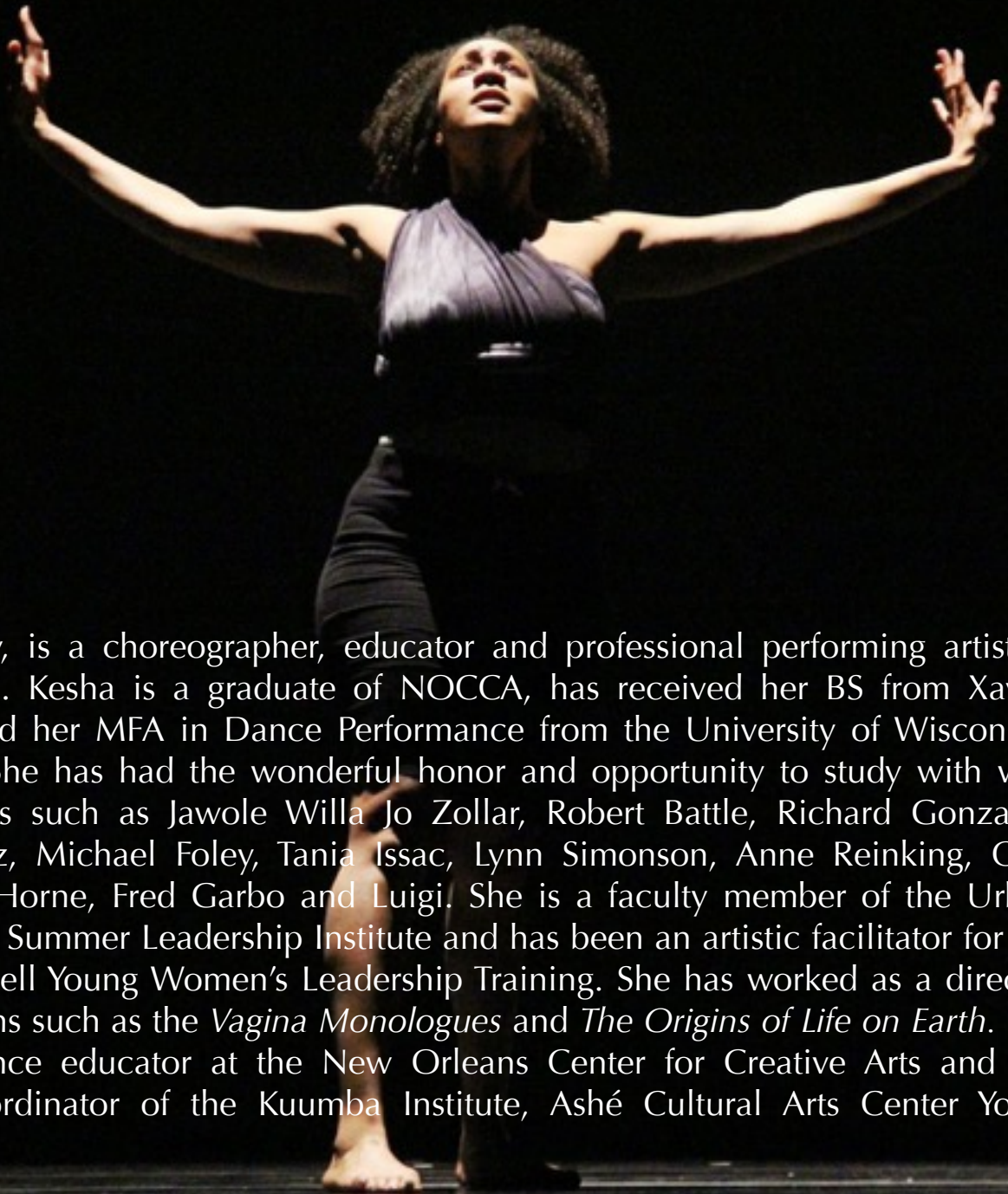
***Taken* - choreography by Kesha McKey - photo credit Be Bound Entertainment**

KMDP has been awarded Big Easy Classical Arts Award nominations as well as project assistance grants from The Arts Council New Orleans and Alternate Roots to present the choreographic works of emerging artists for "Vessels", a self produced concert at the Contemporary Arts Center N.O.

The work of KMDP has also been presented by Dancing Grounds New Orleans and Ashe' Cultural Arts Center in partnership with the Fatherhood Consortium. They have performed and devised choreography for Southern Voices Dance Out Loud 7, The Distillery Showcase at the Contemporary Arts Center, Big Bang Conference, Courageous Conversations Summit, Dance for Social Change Festival, and the Guantanamo Public Memory Project.

Artistic Director

Founder and Artistic Director, Kesha McKey, established KM Dance Project to provide professional performance and choreography opportunities for dancers in the New Orleans community as well as a platform to artistically present commentary on social justice issues. Her previous works, which earned Big Easy Classical Arts Award nominations, include "Taken" (2013) – addressing violence in African American communities as well as the growing absence of chief males in the African American family – and "Distorted Images" (2012) – a personal outlook on self image, truth, discontent and the unrealistic expectations of female body image created by the media.



Kesha McKey, is a choreographer, educator and professional performing artist in New Orleans. Kesha is a graduate of NOCCA, has received her BS from Xavier University and her MFA in Dance Performance from the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She has had the wonderful honor and opportunity to study with well renown artists such as Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, Robert Battle, Richard Gonzales, Miguel Lopez, Michael Foley, Tania Issac, Lynn Simonson, Anne Reinking, Chet Walker, Nat Horne, Fred Garbo and Luigi. She is a faculty member of the Urban Bush Women Summer Leadership Institute and has been an artistic facilitator for the Unita Blackwell Young Women's Leadership Training. She has worked as a director on productions such as the *Vagina Monologues* and *The Origins of Life on Earth*. She is also a dance educator at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts and the Program Coordinator of the Kuumba Institute, Ashé Cultural Arts Center Youth Program.

Distorted Images- choreography by Kesha McKey - photo credit Peter Nakhid

Community Engagement

KM Dance Project is a company of professional dancers who are also educators. As part of our mission we are committed to providing opportunities for young dancers to experience instruction in dance technique as well as dance making. We are also committed to encouraging young dancers to choreograph and to develop careers in dance as well as empowering youth with crucial leadership and development skills that facilitate achievement and success in the world of dance and everyday life.

Serving a wide range of communities – from under-served populations to University dance students – we are excited to offer classes in Modern, Contemporary, Ballet, Jazz and Composition as a part of our residency options. We can also provide residencies that include professional performance and choreographic opportunities for young dancers in the community.



Distorted Images- choreography by Kesha McKey - photo credit Peter Nakhid

Repertory



photo credit Melisa Cardona

BOSCHIMANNE: LIVING CURIOSITIES

Boschimanne: living curiosities, explores the story of Sara "Saartjie" Baartman with focus on exhibition of the African American female body image and the establishment of European ideas of black female sexuality. It investigates the scientific and philosophical assumptions of black women which emerge in representations of savage sexuality, degradation and racial inferiority.

Premiere: August 10, 2015, The Contemporary Arts Center

Choreography: Keshia McKey

Running Time: 15 minutes

Dancers: 3

Lighting Design: Jebney Lewis

Costume Design: Torrence Taylor

Live Accompaniment: Cellist Monica McIntyre

video clip: <https://youtu.be/RBOo84TuLXU>

INTERRUPTED

Interrupted addresses the physical manifestations associated with the fight to live. It explores the mental and physical reactions of the body as it is faced with the inevitability of death. Though it is known that we will all perish one day, the "will to live" continues to resist the inevitable. Along with the challenges experienced in life threatening illness, people of color endure consistent disparities in treatment accessibility and survival rates. These battles are infused with emotional challenges surfacing in palpable reactions.

Premiere: September 12, 2015, The Contemporary Arts Center

Choreography: Keshia McKey

Running Time: 10 minutes

Dancers: 4

Lighting Design: Danny Clifton

Costume Design: Keshia McKey

Music: Ambient Master 2 stück 1, Y84F, 130216_laniakea



photo credit Melisa Cardona

80's FEVER

80's Fever honors the 70's and 80's era in Pop and R&B culture through the lens of what was once an American musical variety television program, "Soul Train." This piece represents the horizon of blacks in the American commercial medium, but more importantly, a community of caucasians, blacks, latin american and asians united and immersed in love through the power of music and social dance.

Premiere: September 12, 2015, The Contemporary Arts Center

Choreography: Jarrell Hamilton

Running Time: 20 minutes

Dancers: 9

Lighting Design: Danny Clifton

Costume Design: Torrence Taylor

Music: *Love Hangover* by Diana Ross, *Give it to Me* by Rick James, *7779311* by The Time, *No One's Gonna Love You* by S.O.S. Band, *Groove Line* by The Heatwave



photo credit Melisa Cardona



photo credit Melisa Cardona

DAUGHTERS

Daughters chronicles the maternal relationships of four generations of women. This piece focuses on the importance of mother-daughter relationships and the emotional influence that stems from this connection.

Premiere: September 12, 2015, The Contemporary Arts Center

Choreography: Catherine Caldwell

Running Time: 8 minutes

Dancers: 4

Lighting Design: Danny Clifton

Costume Design: Catherine Caldwell

Music: *Nayatiti* by Andrew Bird

TAKEN

Taken is inspired by the historical epidemic of the absentee father in African American families and communities. Using dance, theatre, spoken word and song, *Taken* exhibits a historical journey depicting significant events that have affected the African American family such as slavery, war, street violence and incarceration.

Premiere: October 10, 2013, Marigny Opera House

Choreography: Keshia McKey

Running Time: 55 minutes

Dancers: 6 / Spoken Word Artists: 2

Costume Design: Keshia McKey

Music: Live Music Accompaniment by Monica McIntyre & Seguenon Kone / Recorded Music Credits: "Rosie" Negro Prison Song, "Ella's Song" by Sweet Honey In the Rock, "Jumping at the Woodside" By Count Basie, "Sing Sing Sing" by Benny Goodman, *Casablanca* "As Time Goes by" by Sam Dooley Wilson, *Roman Holiday* "I Don't Know How to Say Goodbye", "That Hamilton Woman" Vivien Leigh 1941, Hotel Rwanda "Interhamwe Attack" by Rupert Gregson-Williams, "New Slaves" by Kanye West, MAAD City by Kendrick Lamar, "Super Buck" by Krump Kings, "Prayer at the Crossroads" by Sweet Honey in the Rock, Dancers' Statements, Ray Nagin Radio Interview, President Barack Obama Campaign Speech

video clip: https://youtu.be/x_qj_IPq0Vo



photo credit Peter Nakhid

DISTORTED IMAGES

Distorted Images is a work inspired by the self image, discontent and truth, with a positive outlook on unrealistic expectations of the female body image. It explores the thought of being broken down to be fixed into your ideal image...not based on reality, but on what we see everyday on tv, billboards, magazines and in the public eye.

Premiere: August 2010, The Contemporary Arts Center

Choreography: Keshia McKey

Running Time: 50 minutes

Dancers: 8 / Spoken Word Artists: 1

Costume Design: Keshia McKey

Music: "For No One" by Zap Mama, "Road of Memories," by James Horner & Sweet Honey in the Rock, "Duo for Violinist and Pianist," by Christian Wolff, "Ji Yu" by Byron Au Yong, "The Escape," by Jeremi Crump, "The Image of Your Body" by Myra Melford, "A Little Push" by Hans Zimmer & James Newton Howard, "A Perfect Lie" by The Engine Room, "Courage" by Superchick

video clip: https://youtu.be/00CE_0R0GIU



photo credit Peter Nakhid

Performances



Peridance APAP Showcase

January 2016 @ the Peridance Capezio Center
Excerpt of *Boschimanne: living curiosities* performed.

Vessels

September 2015 @ Contemporary Arts Center
A KMDP Concert featuring choreographic works by Kesha McKey, Jarrell Hamilton, and Catherine Caldwell

The Big Bang Conference

August 2015 @ Ashe Cultural Arts Center
Taken was a featured performance of the Sankofa presentation for this educators' convening.

The Distillery

August 2015 @ Contemporary Arts Center
Distillery Resident artist Kesha McKey premiered her new choreography, *Boschimanne: living curiosities*.

Southern Voices: Dance Out Loud 7

January 2015 @ Contemporary Arts Center
D'Project's Southern Voices: Dance Out Loud 7
Concert featuring *Daughters* by company member Catherine Caldwell.

Guantanamo Public Memory Project

November 2014 @ Ashe Cultural Arts Center
Excerpt of *Taken* was the featured closing performance for the Guantanamo Memory Project.

Courageous Conversations Summit

October 2014 @ Sheraton Hotel
An excerpt of *Taken* was the featured opening performance for the 2014 Courageous Conversations Summit.

Dance for Social Change 2014

September 2014 on the corner of Oretha Castle Haley Blvd @ Martin Luther King Blvd.
An excerpt of *Taken* was a featured site specific performance for the 2014 Dance for Social Change Festival. (see video clips @ <http://dancinggrounds.org/dance-for-social-change/>).

Interrupted- choreography by Kesha McKey - photo credit Melisa Cardona

Awards

2016 Big Easy Classical Arts Award Nominations for Best Modern Dance Presentation and Best New Choreography (Original Work) - **Vessels**

2015 Alternate Roots Project Development Grant

2015 Arts Council New Orleans Project Assistance Grant

2014 Big Easy Classical Arts Award Nomination for Best New Choreography (Original Work) - **Taken**

2013 Arts Council New Orleans Project Assistance Grant

2013 Big Easy Classical Arts Award Nominations for Best Modern Dance Presentation and Best New Choreography (Original Work) - **Distorted Images**

2012 Arts Council New Orleans Project Assistance Grant

Commentary

McKey's dance production Taken covers a much bigger time span in its poignant narrative about the plight and struggles facing black men.

McKey's own voice comes over the speakers as she states how she wants to "...try to make a difference one step at a time," and that is exactly what she's done with her creation of Taken. She's gone even further, though, by embracing and applauding the steps of others as well.

- by Kelley Crawford, NOLA Defender

I just want to thank you and the entire cast/dance troupe again for the profound, powerful and beautiful production "Taken". At the end of the entire piece, I just felt affirmed and encouraged to (continue to) be what I am called to be to make a positive difference in the lives of Afrikan/Afrikan American people... which will make a positive difference for all.

- Nana Anoa Nantambu

Interrupted- choreography by Kesha McKey - photo credit Melisa Cardona



Astonishing, beautiful and powerful way to use dance for a social change. Thx!

To see the real issues that continue to plague the black family and community is refreshing, powerful and so necessary. Thank you for doing this-for spreading the truth. Truly beautiful and touching.

Incredible moving and powerful!

Amazing- that voice, an incredible and unique representation through movements.

Proud to bear witness to such truth delivered by such talent.

The most thought provoking, goosebump-raising piece of art and culture I have seen in a long long time, thank you.

So so so powerful and honest. The performers were tremendous and unforgettable. Raw emotion.

Powerful performance, well done!

Powerful. Beautiful, Thank you.

This performance was moving and entertaining. It reminds me a lot of me own experience of the American Dream. The pursuit of happiness is my main focus now.

A beautiful way to acknowledge our painful history. So important. Chills.

Impressive, amazing, powerful, experience, creative, pleasant.

Excellent!

– Dance for Social Change Comments



Boschimanne: living curiosities- choreography by Kesha McKey - photo credit Melisa Cardona

Contact and Booking

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EPK: <http://artistecard.com/KMDanceProject#!>

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80's Fever- choreography by Jarrell Hamilton - photo credit Melisa Cardona