

# SpectorDance

## Artist's Statement Fran Spector Atkins

My artistic practice has always been driven by curiosity, a passion to investigate ideas, and a strong determination to impact social awareness. My process begins with research on a chosen topic, which is a journey of surprise and discovery. As I delve into new ideas, I am delighted by the process of translating information into physical expression. Ideas are the starting point, and these ideas fuel

My creative foundation is dance, but my artistic practice has grown to embrace collaboration with both arts and non-arts disciplines. For example, I have partnered with the United Farm Workers for *Common Ground*, ocean scientists like Sylvia Earle for *Ocean Trilogy*, former gang members for *East West*, and children who have parents deployed for *When You Were Gone*. Each project uses technology to merge factual information from filmed interviews with experts with multiple aesthetic elements to heighten awareness of socially relevant topics in a way that reaches people's hearts! I have found that various disciplines weaving their insights together can express more in partnership than they each can alone.

Along with each project, I create associated engagement opportunities targeting diverse audiences. For example, with *Ocean Trilogy*, we offered the *Ocean Arts Festival*, featuring ocean-themed art in any genre created by artists under the age of 25. With *East West*, we invited at-risk young adults to perform with the SpectorDance Company dancers. These associated, innovative engagement opportunities employ dance to expand awareness, promote dialogue, and inspire action.

I believe that this work is unique, and that as it continues to evolve, it will meaningfully expand and contribute to the field of dance.

*Wildfires* is the next step in my progression, creating another work to celebrate the power of dance as a tool for addressing critical issues and a catalyst for social change. *Wildfires* will contribute to a better understanding of the increasing prevalence of wildfires in our state, our nation and our globe. Based on partnerships between dance, science, and Indigenous knowledge, *Wildfires* will build bridges between diverse parts of our community and generate new audiences

It is well documented that the proliferation of wildfires is intimately linked to climate change and misguided views on fire suppression. Artists have an opportunity and a responsibility to weigh in, to take part in the broad conversation, and to raise awareness about the complexities of this critical problem. The topic of wildfires also evokes visceral power and is full of metaphor. It is an artistic topic full of images about destruction and renewal. I am inspired on every level to embark on the journey of this new project.