

“During Covid-19 I swam in theory around pleasure activism. It led me to wonder how my fellow people of colour can cultivate intellectual pleasure, artistic autonomy and all feel our stories are valid. As I spoke with community members globally it is apparent we are itching to see ourselves reflected on stage and screen; this work takes that idea and puts locals into the centre spotlight with the dancers framing them on either side.

*I Am Carisma* brings 10 audience members 1 at a time onstage speaking and interacting with objects in the style of ASMR. The text that is being read is co-written by the public who contribute via the word game Mad Libs. These word games are an American staple and brought me such joy as a child. Now popularised with international late night television, comedians like Jimmy Fallon have reintroduced this arena of storytelling. The choreography goes head on with this storytelling.

My process for choreographing these are a series of three instructions that are explored simultaneously in each section—musical, emotional and anatomical. Through these instructions that the dancers hear in an earpiece, a symphony of limbs emerge from dancers moving to the same rhythms but never in the same quality, providing an almost impressionistic unison.

The social healing and path to recovery is where this work is derived from. Whether that be in large community gatherings or conceptual solo performance, I am always exploring how I help others feel their own emotions more in a way that is empowering and sensitive to the viewer. *I Am Carisma* is a responsive call to action. It is these calls to action that remind me why artists do what we do, and align with the ethos of authentic community engagement, achieving my goal of empowering people in these three communities, LGBT+ , Youth and Culturally and Linguistically Diverse people (CaLD).

Life is messy; it can succeed or fail. *I Am Carisma* explores the beauty of many variables being negotiated and the audience, cast and crew having equal control.

My dear late friend Carisma was a hip hop dancer and was in the dance crew scene in the naughties. I know she would love this work and see how each dancer has their own agency and permission to be messy.

Choreographed failure can be beautiful to watch, *if we allow it.*”

- Jonathan Homsey