

The Root of It Is Interdependence with Vanessa Cruz

Hosted by Rianne Svelnis and Harmanie Rose

In this episode, Vanessa tells us about moving through institutional dance education alongside her mobility device Pluto, her rigorous learning in community organizing and solidarity work, and the myriad of forms, aesthetics, and culture that show up in her artistic process.

Vanessa Cruz website <https://www.galaxiesdance.info/home>

Dancing Disability Lab <https://dslabs.ucla.edu/labs/dancing-disability/>

Krip Hop <https://www.facebook.com/KRIPHOPWORLDWIDE>

Affinity A.I.D.E. <https://www.instagram.com/csulbaffinity/?hl=en>

DANC Dance Artist National Collective <https://danceartistsnationalcollective.org/>

Bio Vanessa Cruz

Vanessa Hernández Cruz (she, her, hers) is an emerging Chicana disabled dancer, choreographer, filmmaker, poet & activist. She was born and raised in Los Angeles, California. She received her Associates Degree in Dance from Santa Monica College. She recently graduated from California State University Long Beach with her Bachelor of Arts in Dance Science.

Most recently her latest dance film DNA: Disability Not Ability was selected by IKOUII to be exhibited in their virtual art show "Without Labels" and won the Honorable Mention award. In 2020, her dance film "Nycto-Eternity" won The Dance Cinema Award from Frostbite International Film Festival and was recently screened for The Midnight Film Festival in New York. In 2018, She won first place in the Global Citizenship Research Symposium: Dance & Disability in Santa Monica College for her dance film "Grey City". Vanessa's choreographic work has received the award for Cultural Diplomacy for Innovation in Choreography from Ballet Beyond Borders in 2019.

Her dance training embodies Horton Technique, Ballet, and various dance forms. She has trained at Cal State Long Beach, Santa Monica College, and in dance intensives that includes: BODYTRAFFIC Dance Company, Gaga Home Lab, LINES Ballet workshop, and AXIS Dance Company: Choreography & performance module. She has had the opportunity to learn choreographic work from Marjani Fortè-Saunders, Barak Marshall staged by BODYTRAFFIC Dance Company, Reagan Li, Meri Bender, Mark Tomasic, Sri Susilowati, Laura Smyth, & Keali'i Ceballos.

Activism through the lens of Disability Justice, intersectionality, and community care is deeply rooted in her work. Through the university student-led organization, Affinity AIDE (Advocates for Inclusion and Dancer Equity), along with the other amazing student cohort, the following has been achieved in the Department of Dance at CSULB: a disability statement in the syllabi, an initiative to ensure all dance concerts are accessible, disability dance in their curriculum and more.

Her lifetime aspirations are to continue to perform, choreograph, create, and to continue to pave an easier path for future disabled artists through her activism.