

Posted by Shelby Robinson / Tuesday, March 11th, 2014



Photo by Brianne Bland. Courtesy of Christopher K. Morgan and Artists.

Christopher K. Morgan grew up in Southern California and remembers having to conserve water because of droughts and water rations.

Currently the Artist in Residence at American University, Morgan has designed choreography performed at venues like the Kennedy Center as well as in 18 countries all over the world.

A choreographer that has worked internationally with dance troupes and on multiple performances, Morgan always thought it was interesting how, in a lot of ways, a person's water usage reflects where they came of age. As Morgan developed as a dancer and choreographer, he continued to think about the importance of water conservation and began to incorporate the idea into his choreography.

Morgan has been an active choreographer since 2002 and his upcoming show “Dissolving” is a result of his ongoing feelings toward water preservation and conservation. Morgan says, “Water conservation has kind of been an ongoing interest in some ways. I think a lot of work that I've made over the years just starts with something I'm trying to figure out, understand or learn how to process and deal with better. Water usage is definitely an issue of our times.

“There are so many ways that our society doesn't make it easy to be mindful of the environment. It can be really difficult to make the right choices that fit your finances and the environment or your time circumstances and the environment. So that prompted me to want to make more about it, just to kind of grapple with it.”

When asked how he can choreograph a dance about something as abstract as water conservation and climate change, Morgan says it's all about finding the right metaphor.

“I started to think about ‘Okay, what is a scenario that I can create on stage that sort of reflects that?’” he said. “One of the things that happens is we have different types of vessels that are holding water on the stage and dancers interact with them. But in their interactions, the water actually splashes and gets the stage wet and then they have to live in, and dance in, the hazardous, slippery mess they have made. To me, that is a metaphor for what is happening in the world. We have these wonderful water resources, we are making a mess of them, and we have to live with them.”

While choreographing and organizing this piece, Morgan says he and his team ran into considerable difficulties, causing them to analyze their environmental impact.

“We had huge questions as we were trying to create this piece. We were trying to use collected rainwater because a lot of the people involved have rain barrels. As we worked on it we realized that moving those rain barrels would probably create a bigger carbon footprint than just turning on tap water. That led to all of these big questions, like how do we utilize the rainwater without creating more of a problem? It became difficult to be true to the message and still incorporate the props the way we wanted to.”

He says he hopes “Dissolving” will spark a greater curiosity and interest in the issue of water conservation. “I think art has a unique ability to pose questions and get people to think without being divisive. We are just asking the questions: ‘Our lifestyle is creating problems that we need to address, how are we going to address them?’”

You can catch “Dissolving” at The Alden this weekend.

Christopher K. Morgan & Artists in “Dissolving”  
March 14 and 15 at 8 p.m.; Tickets: \$27, \$15 for students and seniors  
The Alden, 1234 Ingleside Ave.  
McLean, 22101  
703-790-0123; [www.aldentheatre.org](http://www.aldentheatre.org)