

Full Circle Belly Dance Festival

October 24 – 26, 2008

Be a part of the adventure..... Tony will be attending the Full Circle Belly Dance Festival. You will have the opportunity to talk with Tony and share your feelings about dance.

Why Women Dance Documentary

By Tony Ferguson

The documentary "Why Women Dance Belly Dance" that I planning for the last year has to do with educating people about Raks Sharki ("dance of the orient" or Oriental dance aka Belly Dance) what it is and isn't--that it is not the Hollywood-ized dance form we know through movies (or is it for some people?), but an evolving multi-cultural phenomenon that simultaneously retains and modifies its tradition.

Some of the questions I have are: Why do women want to learn and dance various middle eastern dances? What draws them to this art form? Are these dances purely middle eastern or are they from all over the world? What benefits do they hope to gain or have realized? Did Raks Sharki begin as exercises to prepare women for child birth and turn into an art form because women realized its value through increased mortality?

As an artist, I am interested in hearing directly from women of all shapes, sizes, backgrounds, experience levels, and reasons for why they dance Raks Sharki, what has drawn them to it, how it makes the feel, and why they believe it is good for them, and what they have realized by dancing. I also suspect why women dance has to do with their primal nature, that the desire to dance goes back to our origins as tribes, something primal, ancient, a sense of feminine collective community and their awareness of power as women and life givers. I feel such a documentary may enlighten anyone who sees it.

What I have mentioned above--these are just some of my questions that I hope to find answers to from women who dance. What I also like as an artist is the diverse interpretation of this dance form, how its evolving in America and being merged into and incorporated into new dance forms from many sources of influence and vice versa.

My question as a budding indie film maker is where is the story? What is the story of why women dance? I have ideas but these are mine, not women's, and I believe through interviewing women the story will unfold in their words and dance and we will all learn something about why women dance.

My plan is to visit workshops, festivals, and individual studios of women. I also plan to interview people off the street about what they think they know about "belly dance" and incorporate the general mis-interpretation of this dance form into the documentary in the hopes that we can educate people about why women dance belly dance and that belly dance or perhaps it should be referred to as Raks Sharki, is a truly unique art form that deserves respect.

This is a working description and title and as I talk to dancers so do my ideas evolve and change. I hope from enough interviews, footage of artists dancing in various locations, I will have enough visual information to tell the story of why women dance belly dance. I would like to submit this short film documentary to film festivals around the world....Tony Ferguson 2008.

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Anna Ferguson has been dancing and performing Middle Eastern dance for over 12 years. She was a member of the Desert Caravan Dance Troupe for most of those years but left recently to branch out as a soloist. She also has experience in tap, ballroom and Latin dance. When not dancing, Anna enjoys time with her husband, Tony, and their four children.

Tony Ferguson is a professional ceramic artist who has worked with clay for 15 years and also taught in a variety of Art mediums part time at local colleges as well as giving workshops around the country in photography and ceramics. He also has experience in photography, both film and digital, poetry and play writing, film making, 2D and 3D design, and drawing. Recently, he has focused his attention on developing his career as an indie film maker and digital photographer doing commercial as well as fine art work.

