

ADESOLA AKINLEYE DANCING STRONG

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BIOGRAPHY

Adesola Akinleye trained at Arts Educational School and later Rambert Academy. The year of her graduation, during their 1984 London season, Akinleye took class with the Dance Theatre of Harlem. Arthur Mitchell invited her back to New York with them. She remained with the company for five years before becoming a freelance dancer in New York and London working with Union Dance Company; taking classes with the Martha Graham School and studying choreography with Bessie Schoenberg, choreographing for DTH's workshop ensemble. While working independently she began to teach Gyrotonics and rehabilitate exercise systems. She also worked as assistant to an off-off Broadway show and produced her first show - a collaboration of works called *'Enchanted Basement'*.

In 1992, having returned to England, she founded **Saltare Dance Company**. During this time Akinleye also worked and performed with Carol Straker Dance Company. Returning to New York in 1996 Akinleye extended Saltare's mandate, creating an Arts Foundation offering classes in three community centres in Islip, Long Island; and having a company that performed in traditional and non-traditional venues. Saltare Foundation received over \$50K in funding support from New York State and Akinleye was awarded *'1999 National Women's History Month Award for Distinguished Achievement in the Field of Dance'* by the Town of Islip. Akinleye taught 'Dance and World Culture', 'Dance Appreciation' and a practical course on choreography at the Faculty of Theatre at the State University of New York.

In 2001 Akinleye moved to Winnipeg, Canada. In her first year there she was the Director of the General School for the School of Contemporary Dancers. She started her own business and created **DancingStrong**. Through DancingStrong Akinleye worked with *Artists-in-the-Schools* program, *Learning Through the Arts* - an initiative from the Toronto Music School and with ArtSmarts, creating an interactive performance / lesson for twelve classrooms in six schools. Akinleye worked as choreographer on a number of productions for the *Manitoba Theatre for Young People*. In 2003 she began lecturing at the University of Manitoba- Physical Education Department, teaching 'Human Movement Principles', 'Human Movement and the Expressive Arts' and 'Creative Dance'.

In 2004 she presented an evening of work 'Running with Scissors-an evening of dance and film' with the help of a grant from the Manitoba Arts Council. She also won a *First Video Award* to further develop her work combining dance and film. Since moving back to London, UK in May 2005 Akinleye has been working as a Community Dance Artist with Green Candle Dance Company and as a Creative Catalyze with Creative Partnerships- North London. She completed an MA in Dance in *Work Based Learning: Dance in Education and Community*, Middlesex University in January 2007 and recently completed her British Sign Language Level One with City Lit, London.

In Autumn 06 she won ADAD's *Trailblazers Fellowship* and the *Bonnie Bird New Choreographers Award*. She has just completed a performance piece *'Truth and Transparency'* commissioned by Dance Northwest and supported by *Grants for the Arts* funding from Arts Council England. The piece was performed in London and Liverpool.

In summer 2007 she was commissioned to create a site specific piece at the Lowery, Salford by Manchester International Festival and Ludus Dance. In Winter 2007 Adesola worked on Trace - St. Albans (a site specific piece) commissioned by Dance in Herts. This piece was performed on site and later at the Robin Howard Theatre, The Place as part of Resolution 08.

Adesola works for Creative Partnerships as an artist and as a Creative Agent in a number of schools in North London. She was recently commissioned to create a work for Dancin' Oxford Festival 2008.