

Ana Maria Alvarez is skilled dancer, prolific choreographer and masterful teaching artist who has achieved multiple accolades and awards for her dynamic works. Inspired by her upbringing, as a Cuban American, raised mainly in the Southeastern United States and the daughter of two labor union organizers/educators, her work boldly traverses the world of social dance, political activism, community organizing and art making. She has had the pleasure of studying with and shaping her movement palate with master artists such as Katherine Dunham, Idalberto Bandera Sidó (Ballet Folklórico Cutumba, Santiago de Cuba), Jawole Willa Jo Zollar (Urban Bush Women, NY), Ann Cooper Albright, Julio Jean and Dr. Eleanor Gwynn. She has also travelled extensively in South America and the Caribbean, studying, practicing and performing Tango and Afro-Cuban secular dances (Timba, Rueda, Rumba and Gaga). Alvarez received a Bachelors of Arts in Dance and Politics from Oberlin College and a Masters in Fine Arts in Choreography from UCLA's Department of World Arts and Cultures. There her thesis work explored the abstraction of "Latin Dance", specifically Salsa, as a way to express social resistance within the US immigration battle and became the impetus for founding CONTRA-TIEMPO Urban Latin Dance Theater in 2005.

Alvarez is a two time grantee of NEFA National Dance Project (2014 and 2016), six time grantee of National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures, five time grantee of the Center for Creative Innovation and the recipient of the 2015 Engaging Dance Audiences Grant administered by DanceUSA. She has been awarded and recognized for her work including the prestigious Mujeres Destacadas award in 2012 by LA Opinion, and most recently she earned a 2016 Los Angeles Women's Theatre Festival Rainbow Award for her work "Agua Furiosa"

In 2012 Alvarez was invited by the LA Department of Cultural Affairs and America Dance Abroad, to represent Los Angeles contemporary dance and CONTRA-TIEMPO as the Internationale Tanzmesse, in Dusseldorf, Germany. Several months later she was invited back to Dusseldorf, to participate in a choreographers laboratory called Kindling/Fresh Tracks, where she began the creative work of "Agua Furiosa". Her choreographic works have been commissioned by and presented by UCLA's Center for the Art of Performance (Agua Furiosa 2016) and the Music Center (Moves after Dark 2015), among others.

Alvarez's work has been presented by over 30 venues including The Ordway (MN 2010, 2014), The Adrienne Arsht Center (FL 2015), Dance Place (DC 2008, 2010, 2016), Lincoln Center (NYC 2009), North Carolina State University Live (NC 2016), Jacob's Pillow (2008) Teatro Favorito (Cuba 2009) and University of Southern California's Voices & Visions (2015) among others. Alvarez and CONTRA-

TIEMPO were also invited to represent the best of American Contemporary Dance Abroad through DanceMotionUSA, a program of BAM and the US Department of State. Through DanceMotionUSA her work was shared throughout Bolivia, Ecuador and Chile.

Alvarez is a passionate educator, much of her work in in the classroom has been influenced by her work with social group workers from the Center for Family Life, "Lifelines" Community Arts Project. From 1999-2002, she worked there, collaborating with social group workers and choreographing works that embodied the struggles and strengths of teenagers in Sunset Park Brooklyn. There Alvarez began to learn and further develop strategies to engage young people through movement and learned how share tools of empowerment with her students by teaching rigorous movement practice to students and a bold embodiment of cultural values. These students, mainly Puerto Rican and Dominican youth, from Sunset Park Brooklyn, taught Alvarez tremendous lessons that are present in the CONTRA-TIEMPO pedagogy today. While in graduate school, (2002-2005) Alvarez taught regularly at UCLA Lab School (then University Elementary School), where she learned about Reggio and developed a project based learning curriculum of 'hip hop as social resistance', that is still taught there today (by Jasmine Burgos). After graduating Alvarez was invited to teach as a full time faculty member and worked with researchers and colleagues to develop ideas a practices of integrating dance and poetry into Social Studies, Science, Mathematics. This work became the birth place of CONTRA-TIEMPO's School Residency Program that reached thousands of students all over Los Angeles in subsequent years. While continuing to build CONTRA-TIEMPO's School Residency Program, Alvarez was invited to teach and lead workshops for other educators by SmART Schools West, Creativity at the Core and Skirball Teachers Institute among others. By 2007 Alvarez and all of the CONTRA-TIEMPO company members were teaching in over 25 different schools all over Los Angeles County. Alvarez continues to teach adjunct at UCLA's Department of World Arts & Cultures and UCLA Lab School