

Joy-Marie Thompson  
Press and Media Kit  
[contact@joymariethompson.com](mailto:contact@joymariethompson.com)  
[Joymariethompson.com](http://Joymariethompson.com)



[Photo by Sherrie Nickol](#)

**Image Description**

Joy-Marie Thompson, a black woman with brown skin and a shaved head, sits on white stairs. Her arms are crossed with her left hand caressing the right side of her face, while her right arms hold her left shoulder. Her eyes pierce into the camera.

### **Biography**

Joy-Marie Thompson is a dancer, choreographer, and certified ANIMAL FLOW© instructor based in Osage Land-otherwise known as Pittsburgh, PA. After receiving her BFA from SUNY Purchase's Conservatory of Dance in 2018, she professionally performed work by Shamel Pitts, STAYCEE PEARL dance project & Soy Sos, Thuy Wykcoff, and Sidra Bell. Before COVID-19, she was a resident at The McKittrick Hotel in *Sleep No More* (NYC) performing choreography by Maxine Doyle. In 2017, she collaborated with dance photographer, Rachel Neville, for the project "Interpretations". In 2018, she founded the popular Instagram account "issadancelook". As a choreographer and collaborator, she has presented work at: August Wilson Center, American Dance Guild, the Women in Dance Conference, Festival PRISMA, Derida Stage, PearlArts Studios, and many film festivals including Dance Film Association's #mydancefilm at Lincoln Center.

### **Short Biography**

Joy-Marie Thompson is a dancer, choreographer, creative director, and certified ANIMAL FLOW©\* instructor from Pittsburgh, PA who is making work that is rooted in the curiosity, spirit, and advocacy of our bodies.

### **Joseph Charles Viola**

**Mother Agent, Talent Representation**

[josephcviola@gmail.com](mailto:josephcviola@gmail.com)

Joseph Charles Viola is a multifaceted creative from Northern New Jersey. Their primary focus is on styling, casting and management, however they also hold ample experience in photography, production, and pr, among other things. They use their power and space to bring forth a \*genuinely\* new perspective of beauty and talent, and the ethics beyond the surface of representation, to ensure active, persistent and lasting change in the industry.



### Artist Statement

As a Black woman who was born via the roots of spirit, legacy, trauma, and lost stories, I am interested in the following question: How can I practice a life that embodies the Spirit of Liberation? I use dance improvisation, meditation, somatic and psychology methodologies, African Diasporic history, awareness of trauma, and Black aesthetics to get me to that answer.

These practices bring me to constantly acknowledge and uplift the Black forerunners (some of who are my ancestors) who paved the way for me to create the work that I do today. They passed the torch of Liberation to me.

The least I could do is get the torch prepared, to light it in a blissful fire, and one day pass it on.



Photo 1: "Interpreting Eartha Kitt" from  
"Interpretations" by Rachel Neville (2017)  
Photo 2: Sleep No More cast headshot (2020)

## **Awards and Achievements**

### **Academic Awards**

SUNY Purchase College Senior Excellence Award  
2018 SUNY Chancellor's Award for Student Excellence  
2018 SUNY Purchase College Bert Terbough Dance Award

### **Grant Awards**

2019 Pittsburgh Foundation in Investing in Professional Artists Grant  
Winner

### **Professional Certificates**

2019 Flying Low and Passing Through  
2020 Animal Flow (Level 1)

## Press

2021

### **City Spotlight: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania**

"A dancer in that work [race and inequality] and burgeoning artist themselves is Joy-Marie Thompson, who trained at Pittsburgh's CAPA arts school and held her first exhibition at the August Wilson African American Cultural Center while completing undergrad at SUNY Purchase's Dance Conservatory."

-slowdanger (anna thompson & taylor knight), Dancegeist Magazine (February 2021 Edition)

2020

### **LINKt: Dancing with purpose; An interview with Joy-Marie about race, gender, and expression**

"Watching Joy-Marie dance I found myself, and the others around me, mesmerized by her ability to improvise. The way she exposes emotions and vulnerability revealing the unapologetic presence of the individual. She undeniably stands out and that is saying a lot considering we are a culture with our eyes glued to screens dealing with information overload and short attention spans."

-Alyssa Scott, True T,  
Mar.12, 2020

<https://www.truetpgh.com/news/linkt-dancing-with-purpose-an-interview-with-joy-marie-about-race-gender-and-representation?fbclid=IwAR3jLL4vCrVKEei9Why2XbytTV-anNZpf9DpPIWeNnlLfHwabPSkMYla78s>

### **Episode #40: No More Handshakes**

"Before everything shut down in the US, Joy-Marie was part of Sleep No More, an immersive theater experience retelling Shakespeare's Macbeth, which we talk about in-depth, along with

Joy-Marie's experiences in Europe, her many collaborations, and thinking about the exotification of black culture."

-Zhiwan Cheung, Seeing Color (podcast),  
Apr. 7, 2020

**2019**

**On Stage: PearlArts Festival**

"Joy Marie Thompson's *Liberation [in progress]*, grabbing us like a modern-day Josephine Baker."

-Jane Vranish, Dance Currents, Aug.  
20, 2019

<https://dancecurrents.com/2019/08/20/on-stage-pearlarts-festival/>

**2017**

**Rochester Dancer featured in August Wilson Center Exhibit**

"The photography exhibit, 'Interpretations,' includes Thompson's stretching, sweeping articulations of artists like Jazz Age singer-dancer Josephine Baker, Broadway star-turned-TV's "Catwoman" Eartha Kitt, and Tony Award-winning choreographer and Kennedy Center Honors recipient Bill T. Jones."

-Scott Tady, Beaver County Times,  
Jan. 13, 2017

<https://www.timesonline.com/b07434be-d449-11e6-b4c3-3f99edeb811d.html>

**CAPA grad pays homage to African American dancers**

"Joy-Marie Thompson, a Rochester, N.Y., native and a junior at Purchase College, State University of New York, is the star of 'Interpretations,' an exhibition on display through Feb. 26 at the Downtown venue."

-Jane Vranish, Pittsburgh Post Gazette,  
Feb. 15, 2017

<https://www.post-gazette.com/ae/theater-dance/2017/02/15/Pittsburgh-CAPA-grad-pays-homage-to-African-American-dancers-in-Interpretations-exhibit-at-August-Wilson-Center/stories/201702280010>

**This Student Reenacted Classic Photos of African-American Dancers, and the Results Are Stunning**

"Dance history can sometimes be a hard sell, since part of what makes dance so thrilling is that it's all about being in the moment. But Joy-Marie Thompson, a junior dance major at SUNY Purchase College, has found a beautiful, compelling way to bring dance's past into the present: In a new exhibit called *Interpretations*, she reenacts classic photos of her African-American forerunners, from Katherine Dunham to Carmen de Lavallade to Desmond Richardson."

-Margaret Fuher, Dance Spirit Magazine,  
Mar 23, 2017

<https://www.dancespirit.com/student-reenacted-photos-african-american-dancers-2326913179.html>