



2021

NATIONAL
VETERANS
CREATIVE
ARTS
COMPETITION

Dance Entry

2021 New Jersey Local Veterans Creative Arts Festival

VA



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

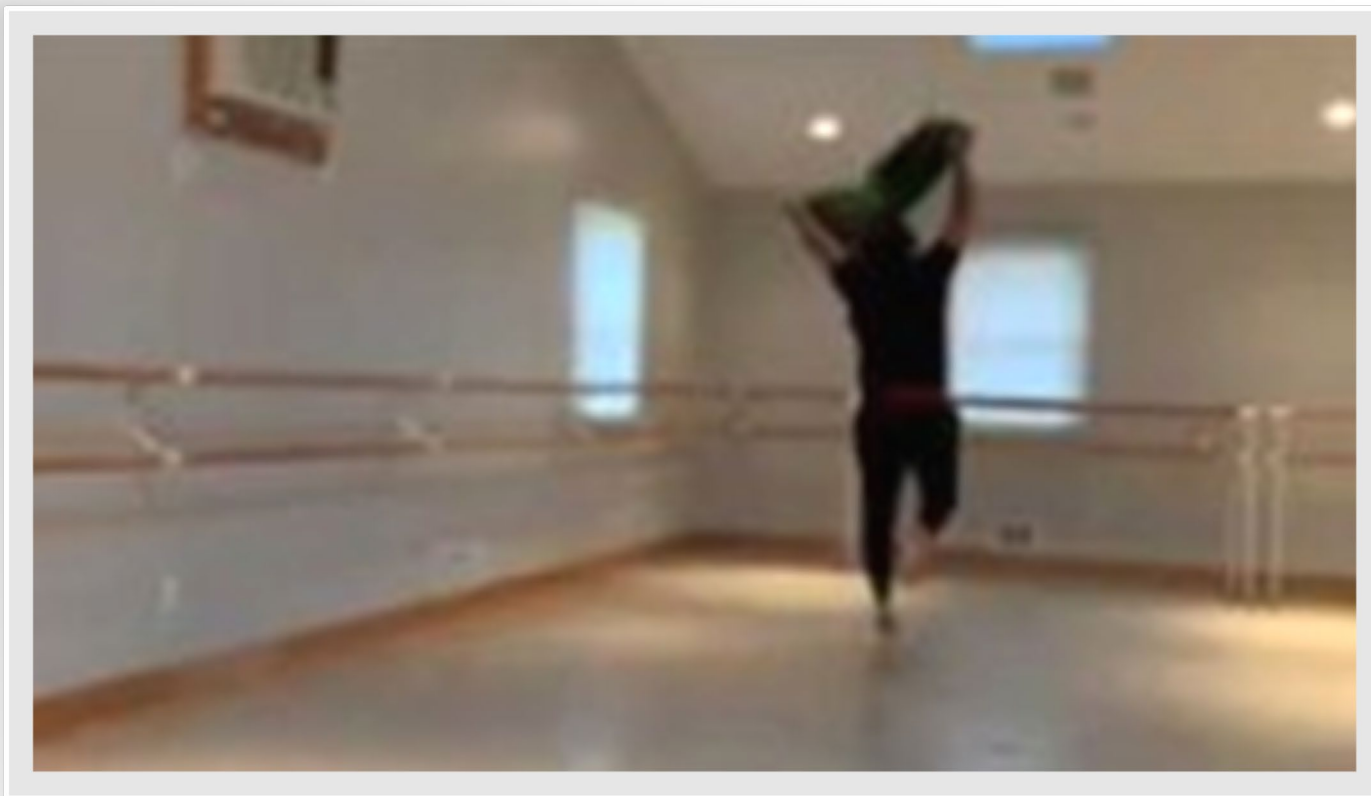
Veterans Health Administration
New Jersey Health Care System

Special Recognition



“Green-aid”

Julián Omar Morales



Green-aid Statement

My choreography is the story of my ongoing addiction to pain and suffering. After the IED killed a part of me, through dance, I've been trying to get that part back. But, I came across more pain when my Marine friend, Mark, killed himself. It devastated me; I felt responsible for his death because I left him behind to pursue a forgotten dream and heal from my wounds. This dance is dedicated to him.

I'm grateful I made it out of the explosion with all my appendages intact, but when I see other Veterans who don't have all of theirs, the guilt kills me. It consumes me because while we all have injuries, Mark and I look normal next to them. My dance is a reflection of how I see my life: a maelstrom of green camouflage that makes it difficult for me to see my path in this world. I'm fortunate because God sent me an angel in the form of a dance professor who helped me dance my pain away long enough for me to live some semblance of a normal life.

Mark and I had the same demons that were born from the war, except while I had choreography to occupy my mind from those demons, he didn't. This dance is the quintessence of our struggles with the hope for better tomorrows.

Thank you to all the 2021 National Veterans
Creative Arts Festival local participants!