



PHOTO BY MIKE LEE

## Dance Mogul: What inspired Us, Naked?

**Kirsten:** After 16 years of seeking to balance art-making and filmmaking with raising a child and sustaining a home, my husband, son, and I had a life change that left us completely in the unknown. We found ourselves giving up almost everything we loved — for the exception of each other in the hope of being able to continue our lives as artists. I could say this was about financial uncertainty but it was much deeper than that. It was about setting boundaries with depleting influences and staying connected to our hearts.

Perhaps reverence to the act of creativity requires such a sacrifice? Who will ever know for sure? I do know that I needed to tell a story about radical trust and perseverance if I was going to continue making films. It was now 2006 and I found myself filming Beatrix Burneston aka Trixie Little and her performance partner Adam Krandle aka The Evil Hate Monkey.

From the first night I saw them perform I was overcome by their bravery on stage and their mastery in drawing community together. Trixie and Monkey's devotion to their peculiar circus-burlesque act was unmistakable. I knew their commitment could tell the story of radical trust I was seeking.

# Director: Kirsten D'Andrea Hollander

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**Dance Mogul:** What do you hope audiences take away from it?

**Kirsten:** To know that creativity is a human right that lives in each of us. Radical trust is real. There is vast beauty in being who you are. Sometimes you just have to put it out there. Fear is real but does not matter when the journey is meant to be. I believe *Us, Naked: Trixie & Monkey* offers ALL this and beyond. After all — Trixie opens the documentary by saying — Be Careful Not To Make Your Dream Too Small.

**Dance Mogul:** What was the most difficult part in putting a documentary like this together and getting it out on the festival circuit?

**Kirsten:** The beauty of this project is that we cultivated a rhythm that allowed us to keep filming till Trixie and Monkey's story felt complete. There was NO script. We truly honored life playing out. The challenge was that we were left with over 600 hours of footage! This can be quite common for feature documentaries. None-the-less it requires an incredible amount of time and focus to carve out the best story possible. Because my style of camera work is based on building relationship and

having open conversation it is very important to have an editor who is detached from the project and can be objective. My original intention was to do basic rough-cut editing and then hire an industry leading editor to do the polishing. My husband and producer Scot Hollander and I campaigned for an editor during the 2011 Independent Film Project (IFP) Film Week in New York City. And I wrote grant after grant — after grant. We just did not get funding for the editor. So what to do when the people who are most passionate to finish the film are also the closest to it? It became clear that we would schedule intimate test screenings and take MANY notes! My husband Scot and I held small test screenings in Baltimore and Trixie and Monkey held small test screenings in Brooklyn. We pooled together all the direct audience responses. I acted on the notes that came up consistently across the varied test screenings. And then a wonderful thing happened. Rose Vincelli-Gustine, former Producer and Program Manager at IFP in New York; Lori Cheattle owner of Hard Working Films in Brooklyn; and Trina Rodriguez a filmmaker peer offered notes of their own. Their notes were amazingly congruent with the notes we had been collecting! It was a rigorous process of re-editing. It was also an AMAZING reminder

that what is needed always shows up. They say it takes a village to raise a child. We had a village show up to provide feedback and push us over the finish line.

**Dance Mogul:** Do you have another documentary on the table?

**Kirsten:** Yes, I have a new feature-length documentary slated for release in 2018. *Anatomy of Wings* is about an unusual group of city girls, college students, and mentors seeking to practice non-judgement during a tumultuous ten-year period in Baltimore City.

**Dance Mogul:** Is there anyone you would like to thank for helping you on your journey?

**Kirsten:** When I was a young girl my mother knew I was an artist and made sure I got on the path. I will always be grateful to Trixie and Monkey for going on a filmmaking journey with me during a pivotal time in my life. ALWAYS — my heart belongs to my husband Scot and our son Sam. They inspire me everyday.

# Us, NAKED

## TRIXIE & MONKEY

Poster design is by Shrenik Ganatra, photography by Mike Lee

RAW HONEY FILMS PRESENTS A FILM BY KIRSTEN D'ANDREA HOLLANDER

STARRING TRIXIE LITTLE AND THE EVIL HATE MONKEY

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PRODUCED BY SCOT HOLLANDER AND KIRSTEN D'ANDREA HOLLANDER

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