



Ms. Lisa Bufano

October 20, 1972 - October 3, 2013

Lisa “Louise” Bufano, 40, of San Francisco, California and Boston, Massachusetts, passed away unexpectedly in her home on October 3. A memorial service was held in San Francisco on Saturday, October 12th. A memorial service will also be held on Saturday Oct. 26th at 10:30AM at St. Robert Bellarmine parish, 198 Haggetts Pond Rd., Andover, MA 01810.

Lisa is survived by her parents, Louis A. Bufano, Jr. and Elizabeth “Betty” Bufano, brothers Andrew Bufano, his wife Lisa Sciacca Bufano and their two children, of Newton, New Hampshire, Peter Bufano and his girlfriend Camilla Finlay, of Allston, Massachusetts, and David Bufano and his wife Tamara Palaganas, of Jamaica Plains, Massachusetts. Also mourning her loss is her long-time dance partner, Sonsheree Giles of the AXIS Dance Company, hundreds of friends across the globe, and her ever-faithful companion and service dog, Bear.

Lisa was born in Bridgeport, Connecticut on October 20, 1972. She graduated from Tewksbury Memorial High School and earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Tufts University/School of the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston in 2003. Following graduation from SMFA, Boston, Lisa worked as a web developer at the Museum of Science in Boston until she left that post in 2005 to pursue her interests in sculpture, stop-motion animation and other forms of the visual arts through The Contemporary Artists Center Residency

in North Adams, Massachusetts.

In 1994 at the age of 21, Lisa suffered a life-threatening bacterial infection that led to the amputation of her fingers and both legs below the knee. In 2006, a professor at the University of Linz who was studying amputees invited Lisa to become what she would later come to call a “shape-shifter.” Uniting her athletic and artistic gifts to create meaningful performance art, Lisa performed her first major work, “Five Open Mouths,” in 2006, in which Lisa portrayed the experience of unwrapping the bandages covering her hands after her fingers had been amputated. Afterward, she created “Four Legs Good”, her first piece using four table legs.

In the years that followed, Lisa moved audiences across the world with her authentic and sometimes raw form of modern dance, including a performance at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. in 2007. She toured with the AXIS Dance Company from 2006 through 2010, performing such works as “The Beauty That Was Mine Through The Middle Without Stopping”, “Dancing To Music”, and “Foregone”. “One Breath is an Ocean for a Wooden Heart” was both choreographed & performed with Sonsheree Giles. Videos of these and other works can be found at LisaBufano.com and on YouTube. During a break from touring in 2009 to address health concerns, Lisa also pursued visual work in dance, painting and softsculpture as a resident artist in Boise, Idaho’s 8th St. AIR Program.

In every medium of her artistry, Lisa explored themes of “the visceral experience of alienation, embodied by creatures, real and imagined.” In a video profile created by Caite Davis in 2012, Lisa reflected on her experience of having “different bodies” depending on what types of prosthetics or props she might or might not be wearing and how it gave her an opportunity to explore the different shapes for purposes of her performances (<http://www.caitdavis.com/media.htm>). As she commented in an article for SMFA’s school

magazine, "I'm not an astounding dancer, but being a performer with a deformity, I find that there's a gut response in audiences, an attraction/repulsion aspect to it that can be compelling. I just hope that there's a balance between that gut response and the substance of a performance." (<http://www.smfa.edu/lisa-bufano>). Also see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lisa_Bufano.

Thousands of friends and fans across the world will miss Lisa's graceful artistry and insightful creativity. Those who knew Lisa best will sorely miss her good nature, sharp wit and easy laugh. She never wanted her story to focus on overcoming adversity (she chafed at the thought of being an Oprah Winfrey human interest story), lest that cloud the message of her art. Yet, she was a sister, mentor and companion on the journey to so many, that she could not avoid inspiring others to be their better selves.

Cemetery Details

Fernwood Cemetery and Crematory

301 Tennessee Valley Road
Mill Valley, CA 94941

Previous Events

Memorial Visitation

OCT **12**. 10:00 AM - 10:30 AM (PT)

Valente Marini Perata & Company
4840 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 333-0161
funerals@vmpandco.com

Memorial Service

OCT **12**. 10:30 AM (PT)

Valente Marini Perata & Company
4840 Mission Street
San Francisco, CA 94112
(415) 333-0161
funerals@vmpandco.com

Tribute Wall

LI

“ I am an engineering teacher in Massachusetts. When I teach my unit on adaptive technologies, I always show the episode of "Design Squad" that features Lisa, (the Water Dancing episode). My students love her in that episode. I googled her today; I had no idea she had passed away. I am very sad. Please accept my condolences.

Lisa - June 06, 2017 at 02:55 PM

JB

“ It's hard to write about someone as wonderful as Ms. Lisa Bufano. I know so few things about life and death and what it means to lose her in this way, on this earth. The only thing I learned in 2013 was that Love is Bigger than Life and Death. And I know that's true.

Jill Brady - June 24, 2014 at 07:25 PM

RK

“ Thinking of our sailing voyage down to Monterey from San Francisco and the smile you had when at the helm of my boat. While I wish for one more day like that with you, I hold on to the days we had, and carry you with me. Miss you very much my friend.
Love, Rory

Rory Kremer - March 02, 2014 at 01:04 PM

RM

“ I just read of Lisa's death. I am over 50, in a wheelchair due to effect of polio and only had a single conversation with Lisa but I cried thinking of her. I know the people here in Boise embraced Lisa

Rick Mattoon - January 21, 2014 at 02:31 PM

BG

“ We send our sympathy to the family and friends of Lisa. We only heard of her through our son and videos of her work, but our hearts go out to you all.

Sincerely,

Bruce and Gloria Rueber

Bruce and Gloria - October 31, 2013 at 06:27 PM

RC

“ I am truly sorry to hear about the passing of Lisa. Although we had lost touch shortly after high school, I had always thought highly of Lisa. I was impressed by her intelligence, her energy and her quick witt. I am saddened to hear the news, as she is far too young to have left us. I wish her to rest in peace and let her know that she will be missed. In reviewing her accomplishments and seeing her video, it is simply amazing of how she turned something that could be perceived as a negative into a positive. Her art and overall thought process is touching.

Sincerely,

Russ Chatfield...

Russ Chatfield - October 24, 2013 at 08:47 AM

 Mulysa Jo

“ lisa & i hadn't known each other long, we met at the american bison/buffalo field in san francisco's golden gate park. her strength, wisdom, & beauty will forever be with me. i wish we were sharing a glass of wine right now..... her voice was so soothing & her eyes full of soul..... RiP my darlingand dance..... xoxo
-mulysa

Mulysa Jo - October 11, 2013 at 07:58 PM

AM

I was so sad to learn of Lisa's passing. I knew her when she was a student at the MFA school. I loved her sly sense of humor and her insightful ways of reading people. The world is smaller without her in it.

AmeliaEve - March 02, 2014 at 06:30 PM