



VITAL SIGNS....VITAL

UP FROM THE ASHES

In the opening moments of Karina Epperlein's 22-minute documentary *Phoenix Dance*, the late Homer Avila dances alone on a dark stage. He moves with such fluidity and power that your eyes can be tricked into thinking he is dancing with three legs rather than with one. The short film—up for Oscar consideration this year—chronicles the making of Alonzo King's *Pas*, a pas de deux choreographed for Avila and Andrea Flores in 2003, one year after Avila lost his right leg to cancer (see cover story, Jan. 2002). Unsentimental and deeply moving, *Phoenix Dance* reveals Avila's unwavering strength, as well as his tender and playful nature, in the face of reinventing himself as a "one-legged" artist.



Courtesy Karina Films