



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Michael Gianaris

Roman Baca

MICHAEL GIANARIS May 19, 2015

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Roman Baca

**Award:** Supporting New York's Heroes

**Year:** 2015

United States Marine Corps

Roman Baca is a Marine Iraq War veteran and the Artistic Director of Exit 12 Dance Company. Exit 12 is a contemporary dance company, committed to creating and performing works of high cultural significance that inspire conversations about worldly differences, and the lasting effects of violence and conflict on communities, families and individuals. Through movement, Exit 12 educates audiences about the reality of war, advocates diversity and mutual understanding through cultural exchange, and champions the humanity and dignity of all people.

In 2007, after serving as a Fire-Team Leader and Machine-Gunner in Fallujah, Iraq, Mr. Baca co-founded Exit 12 Dance Company. He has choreographed several major works relating to the military and their families, and also writes and lectures about his experiences. Exit 12 Dance Company has been recognized by Time Magazine, The Village Voice, The Daily Beast, The Huffington Post, The Washington Post, The SF Chronicle, The National Endowment for the Arts Quarterly Magazine, and NPR.

As a teaching artist, Mr. Baca has traveled to work in Erbil, Iraq, and in New York City public schools, teaching young adults how to express their experiences through choreography and non-verbal expression. He has conducted veteran/civilian movement workshops that provide tools to aid veterans in the workplace and to bridge the civilian-veteran divide.

Mr. Baca is a New York City Service Platoon Member with The Mission Continues, and a Leadership Fellow with Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. He has received numerous awards and commendations for his service and for his continued service afterward, with Exit 12 Dance Company. Mr. Baca's priorities are defined by his desire to help veterans realize their potential in the civilian world – and the impact they can make in their communities.