



BY ADRIAN GOMEZ  
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With each intricate movement, there is a purpose. The intention may vary, yet dance sparks a conversation without words.

During the third annual Shift Dance Festival, which begins this week, performances by artists from Chicago, Los Angeles and Austin, Texas, will be on the main stage.

The trip to New Mexico will be a little bit of a homecoming for Erica Gionfriddo.

She is the director of the Austin-based ARCOS Dance.

The company will bring its transmedia performance, "In the Ether," featuring choreography and performance by Gionfriddo and media by Eliot Gray Fisher, co-directors of the interdisciplinary group originally founded in Santa Fe. It will be performed at 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 28, at the North Fourth Art Center.

"It's like coming home," Gionfriddo says. "We have a lot of friends in New Mexico. Eliot is a native Santa Fean and we've been back a few times since moving to Austin in 2014. This will be our first time performing in Albuquerque."

ARCOS Dance got its start in Santa Fe in 2011.

Gionfriddo says "In the Ether" is an evening-length transmedia dance piece that actively integrates live-streaming video and live performance, posing questions about our relationship with current technology and the ways in which we perform our identities online.

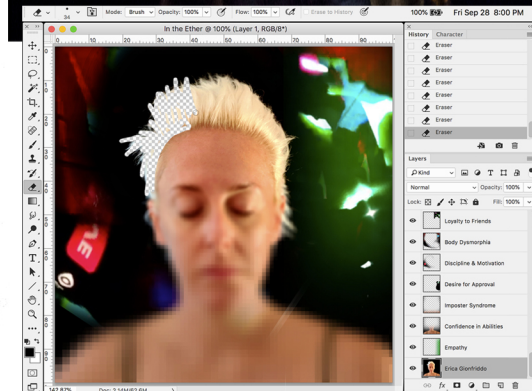
Gionfriddo's investigation of these questions began in early 2016, when popular social media platforms introduced live-streaming video features, suddenly giving everyone real-time, intimate windows into millions of moments taking place around the world, from the banal to the heartwarming to devastating.

"The whole piece questions how technology shapes our humanity," Gionfriddo says. "The average lay person has a performance each time they post. What are the consequences? In this version at the festival, I'm using my highly personal experiences with identity in the piece."

In response to the growing research identifying the effects of social media on psychological and emotional development, including its links to anxiety and depression and how it incentivizes sensationalism, Gionfriddo became curious about the technology's implications for dance.

She began creating solo and group works weaving Facebook's live-streaming function as both theatrical mechanism and commentary on the pervasiveness of social media in our daily lives.

In them, dancers manipulate phones as much as their bodies, and what they capture live is simultaneously projected onstage.



"I don't think (social media) is going anywhere," Gionfriddo says. "I'm in a graduate program and this is the subject of a lot of my research. It's fascinating and I don't think non-participation is an option. We can create boundaries of our relationship with it. We need to have more synthesis between the two."

Gionfriddo has worked with the directors of the festival in the past and this is her first time participating.

"I enjoy the fact that the festival is commissioning new work and are pushing artists," Gionfriddo says. "They are giving each one of us a full evening to present our work. I'm inspired by what they are doing."

For Lisa Nevada, co-director of the festival, one of the biggest challenges is finding a way to present the technology.

"With ARCOS, they are heavy on technology and we need to have everything available to have it translate," Nevada says. "We've been thinking about it for a long time and we decided to make that leap this year."

With the festival in its third year, Nevada says the event continues to push boundaries within dance.

The main stage performances kick off at 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 27, with Shift Dance co-directors Jacqueline M. Garcia, Nevada, and Kelsey Paschich presenting three new works, including "Atuona," a newly commissioned work by

COURTESY OF SHAREN BRADFORD/THE DANCING IMAGE

Erica Gionfriddo is seen in the transmedia piece, "In the Ether," presented by Austin, Texas-based ARCOS Dance.

"In the Ether"

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ARCOS DANCE

Chicago-based artist Jessica Miller Tomlinson. "Atuona" is an abstract trio for three distinct female dancers, loosely inspired by the work of French post-Impressionist artist Paul Gauguin.

At 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 29, Rebecca Lemme/Acts of Matter closes the festival with "I/D" — an exploration of origin story. The piece looks at the different ways identity is constructed — how assumptions about the places we're from and the way we look impact how we are seen by others. The piece looks at how the very act of accepting or rejecting these markers becomes a part of who we are.

"What we look for is how relevant their work is," Nevada says. "Are they connecting to what's happening in the world? Are they interested in sharing with our audiences through public engagement? We look for individuals and companies that are looking to expand that conversation."

## IF YOU GO

**WHAT:** Shift Dance Festival

**WHEN AND WHERE:** Main stage performances — 8 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 27, with Jessica Miller Tomlinson; 8 p.m. Friday, Sept. 28, ARCOS Dance; 8 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 29, with Rebecca Lemme/Acts of Matter at North Fourth Art Center, 4904 Fourth NW; Workshop Intensive — 10 a.m. Monday, Sept. 24, with ARCOS Dance; 10 a.m. Tuesday, Sept. 25, with Rebecca Lemme; 10 a.m. Wednesday, Sept. 26, with Jessica Miller Tomlinson; 10 a.m. Saturday, Sept. 29, with SHIFT DANCE at Maple Street Dance Space, 3215 Central NE; and public engagement series noon Monday, Sept. 24, Tuesday, Sept. 24, and Wednesday, Sept. 25, at Maple Street Dance Space, 3215 Central NE

**HOW MUCH:** \$20 general admission, \$15 students and seniors for main stage performances; \$20 for single-day drop-ins for workshop intensive; \$5 for public engagement. Purchase tickets at [shiftdancepresents.com](http://shiftdancepresents.com).