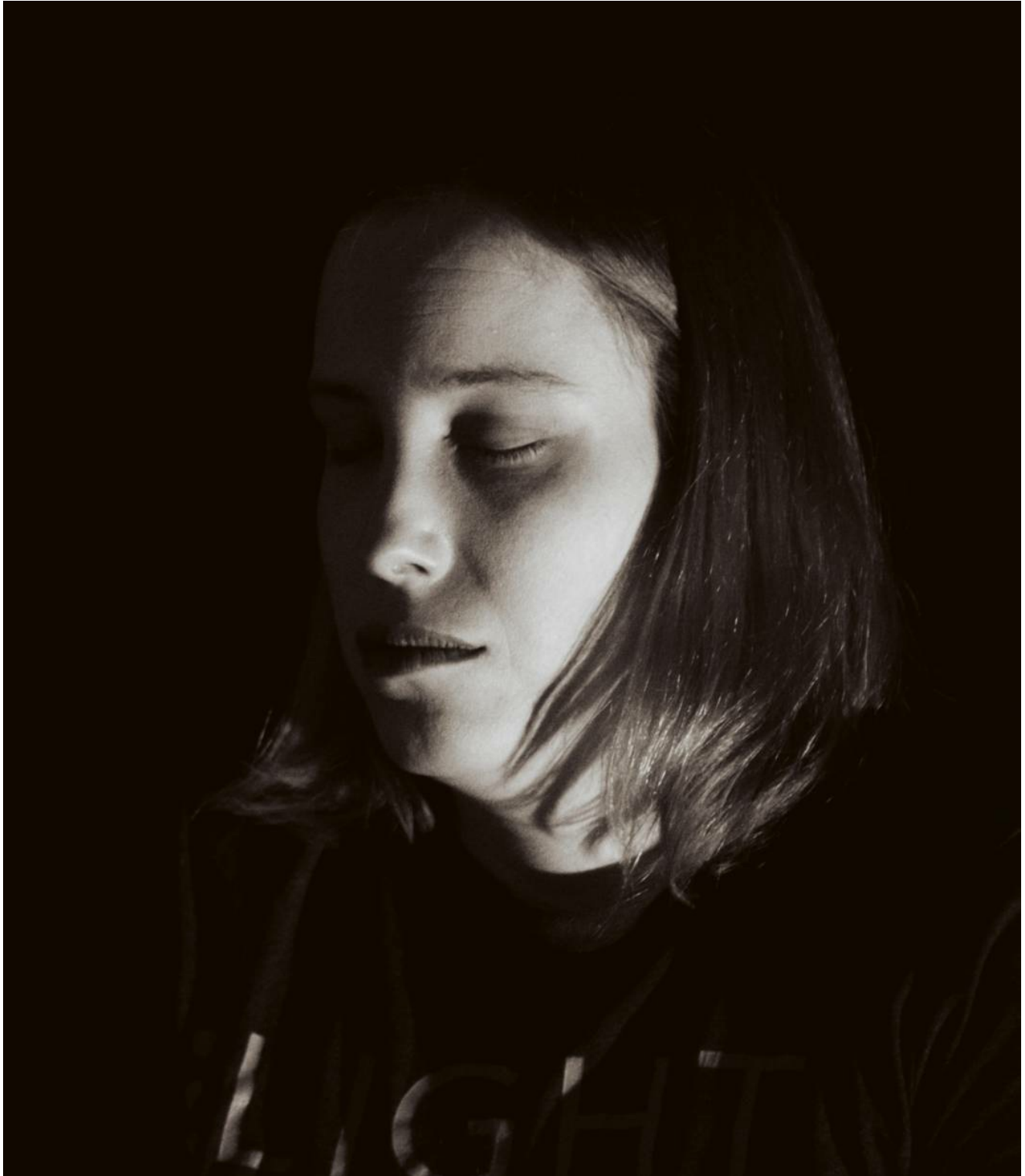


Dancing in different senses with '(in)Visible'

48* 48hills.org/2019/09/jess-curtis-gravity-invisible

Emily
Wilson

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For many of us, going to a dance performance means going to a theater, sitting in the dark and watching the bodies move onstage.

But what if you can't see? The Jess Curtis/ Gravity company wanted to make dances that visually impaired people could enjoy, and with their newest performance, *(in)Visible*, Oct 3 through 13 at CounterPulse, they do that by having touch tours before the show and audio descriptions of what's going happening onstage.

Tiffany Taylor, one of the six visually impaired, blind, and sighted performers in *(in)Visible*, studied theater in college. She went with a group at Lighthouse for the Blind to a show that choreographer Jess Curtis did a couple years ago.

"It was accessible with audio description and a haptic tour. It was really cool and that's how I knew I wanted to dance," she said. "After that, Jess was teaching a contact improvisation class that I took from him. It's not set choreography and often not done to music. It's more about how bodies work together to form movement."

Along with becoming a dancer, Taylor is consulting for Curtis's invaluable Gravity Access Service: she and Curtis launched a project to help people find performances in the Bay Area that provide different services for visually or hearing impaired people.



A scene from Jess Curtis/Gravity's '(in)visible.' Photo by Sven. A. Hagolani

As a consultant, Taylor works to make sure that arts websites and PR material are accessible to people who have visual impairments, testing it out to make sure with screen reading software, people can find what they need.

"I test the websites to see can I find where to buy tickets? Do the photos have captions? Can I find information about the show?" she said. "Typically disabled people aren't made that welcome. We're trying to get people to think about considering description. Like if a musical is coming, one night you might have audio description. We're trying to offer subsidized help to reach out to deaf people or blind people."

For *(in)Visible*, visually impaired people will have different ways to access the performance, Taylor says.

"Some of description is built into the show by actors with microphones they speak into and the patrons have sort of like a headset for court reporting where they can hear in their ear what they're saying about an individual dancer or the whole show," Taylor said. "With a haptic access tour, people come before the show and tour the space and maybe touch the props or any costumes and meet the performers."

The performers recently staged the piece in Berlin and now it's premiering in San Francisco with dancers from both the United States and Germany. The Bay Area has been a place known for forward thinking in disability rights, Taylor says, and she's excited to bring more diversity and access to performance here.

"A couple years ago, I first met Jess and he introduced me to this, and now I'm in a piece, so it's sort of full circle for me," Taylor said. "I didn't do this till I saw a show, and now I hope people can challenge how they think."

(IN)VISIBLE

October 3-13

Counterpulse

[Tickets and more information here](#)