



DOMAIN

...

A TRANSMEDIA PERFORMANCE BY



ARCOS

“THANK YOU. YOU’VE HELPED ME UNDERSTAND WHAT IT’S LIKE TO BE HUMAN.”

Domain is a transmedia performance that explores the urgent philosophical implications of the rapid evolution of artificial intelligence. Intertwined interactions with a participatory installation, online multimedia content, and a theatrical performance immerses the audience in the complex relationship between Jonah, an unorthodox digital savant, and her creation, ANNI, the world’s first sentient artificial intelligence. The narrative unfolds across these platforms in a series of surreal, fragmented scenes from Jonah’s life.



AS TECHNOLOGY DRAMATICALLY RECONFIGURES OUR DAILY EXISTENCE, *DOMAIN* PROVOKES US TO CONSIDER THE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS OF HUMANITY THAT REMAIN BEYOND ITS GRASP OF COMPREHENSION.



ARCOS

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INSTALLATION

Audience members can have one-on-one conversations with artificial intelligence character ANNI onscreen via a headset.

MULTIMEDIA

Multimedia chapters released on a [website](#) and via text message before and after the live performance extend the experience.

PERFORMANCE

The 90-minute theatrical performance combines dance, theater, cinema, and interactive technology to tell its story.

COMPANY + DIRECTORS

ARCOS experiments rigorously to discover adventurous new forms of contemporary performance. They have presented and won awards at festivals including Currents International New Media Festival, Online Performance Art Festival, and Edinburgh Fringe, created commissions of new work at interdisciplinary symposia at Connecticut College's Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology and Texas State University, served as guest teaching artists at institutions such as University of Colorado Boulder and Colorado College, published peer-reviewed writing in *Theatre Design and Technology* journal, participated such residencies as Ucross Foundation and KHN Center for the Arts, and received grants from public and private sources including the National Endowment for the Arts, Mid-America Arts Alliance, and the Charles and Joan Gross Family Foundation.



ERICA GIONFRIDDO
DIRECTOR / CHOREOGRAPHER

ERICA GIONFRIDDO is a dancer, choreographer, and somatic researcher experimenting with how bodies—and humans—connect. She is a co-founder and co-director of ARCOS, where her work has been commissioned and presented at festivals and institutions including Edinburgh Fringe, 15th Biennial Symposium on Arts and Technology, CounterCurrent, and Currents New Media. She has performed works by Anna Sokolow, David Parsons, Robert Moses, Gail Gilbert, Arturo Fernandez, and Luciana Achugar and choreographed for and Texas State University, Texas A&M University, Moorehead State University, Shenandoah Conservatory, Motion X Dance DC, and INTERDANSA. She holds a BFA in Dance Performance and Choreography from Shenandoah Conservatory, is certified as a GYROKINESIS® and GYROTONIC® trainer, and serves as adjunct lecturer in dance at UT Austin.



CURTIS UHLEMANN
DIRECTOR / CHOREOGRAPHER

CURTIS UHLEMANN is a choreographer who has presented work throughout the United States and Europe. He is a co-founder and co-director of ARCOS, and his work has been recognized by the government of Spain, *Dancing Times*, and *Dance Magazine*, among others, for its exceptional use of space layered with visceral movement and a keen sense of musicality. He has studied and performed works by José Limón, Betty Jones, Lisa Race, David Dorfman, Paul Taylor, David Parsons, and Mark Morris. He holds a BFA in Modern Dance / Dance Science and Injury Prevention from Brockport College. He has served as designer and choreographer for the Boston Crusaders Drum and Bugle Corps and ten-time world champions Cadets Drum and Bugle Corps, and continues to teach and judge color guards around the country.



ELIOT GRAY FISHER
DIRECTOR / MULTIMEDIA ARTIST

ELIOT GRAY FISHER is an interdisciplinary artist working at the intersection of performance and technology. As co-director of ARCOS, he propels its inventive integration of new media and compelling dramatic narrative in performance. He has composed music and designed sound for short and feature film, theater, and dance, created documentary and animated shorts, built interactive installations, and created original theatrical performances. He has received awards and commissions from the Paul Robeson Fund for Independent Media, the Ammerman Center for Arts and Technology, and the Charles and Joan Gross Family Foundation, among others. He holds BA degrees in Film Studies from Wesleyan University and Documentary Studies from College of Santa Fe, and an MFA in Interdisciplinary Arts from Goddard College.

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PRODUCTION SPONSORS

CONNECTICUT
COLLEGE

ammerman center
[arts & technology]

performa/dance

CURRENTS
Santa Fe International New Media Festival

freSH
santafe

THE MUSEUM
OF HUMAN ACHIEVEMENT

all is fair

FUSEBOX
FESTIVAL

EST. 1994
NEBRASKA
CITY

RIG RIG
DANCE COLLECTIVE

2905

ENGAGEMENT

TEXAS STATE
UNIVERSITY



ARCOS

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OUTREACH + ENGAGEMENT



ARCOS carries out its mission by ensuring that its innovative multimedia performances are both relevant and accessible to a diverse range of contemporary audiences by embedding outreach and education into its performance practice. The artists of ARCOS are passionate about working to engage communities through interdisciplinary performances that challenge dominant ways of thinking, reflect the turbulent process of traditions in flux, and explore the complexity of being human today. *Domain* takes on the urgent effects of rapid technological advancement in contemporary society and can be presented as a standalone performance or accompanied by residency events in collaboration with artistic, scientific, or educational institutions and organizations. Mutually beneficial partnerships were instrumental in the original creation of *Domain*, as described in these testimonials from commissioning institutions.

TEXAS STATE UNIVERSITY

ARCOS served as guest artists-in-residence in October 2015, teaching contemporary ballet, modern, composition, multimedia performance history, video for dancers, and creating an original multimedia dance piece for advanced students in the Dance Division's performance ensemble. ARCOS returned in September 2016 to premiere Domain, which was commissioned for Engagement: Symposium of Philosophy and Dance.

"It was a pure joy to have them here and I am deeply grateful for their work with our dancers. ARCOS' artistic integrity and generosity of spirit are so beautifully evident in their process."

LEANNE SMITH

DIRECTOR, DANCE DIVISION, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

"The artistry produced by ARCOS Dance is vital for upcoming dancers, choreographers, designers, and technicians to experience first-hand. Their seamless blend of technology and choreography, of stagecraft and story is where the dance industry is going and they are experts in this medium."

SCOTT VANDENBERG

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

"I have no doubt that after experiencing ARCOS' lectures, classes, process, and performance, our students' understanding of making art grew (and will continue to grow) beyond what they could have ever expected as students of dance."

KAYSIE SEITZ BROWN

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

"ARCOS is a one of a kind team with extraordinary talent, passion and discipline, and we are so grateful for their time here!"

ANA BAER CARRILLO

ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE AND DANCE

CONNECTICUT COLLEGE

ARCOS was one of three interdisciplinary artistic teams selected from over sixty applicants invited to Connecticut College to present a new commissioned work for the 2016 Ammerman Center Symposium on Arts and Technology, Open All Ports, a forum for multidisciplinary dialogue at the intersection of arts, technology, and contemporary culture. They presented ANNI (Archival Narrative Network Initiative), which went on to become a key element of Domain.

"We were thrilled to have ARCOS come to Connecticut College as one of our commissioned artistic teams. During their weeklong residency, ARCOS introduced their creative work process to great effect to various classes, including a time-based media art class; a computer science introduction class; and a dance media class. The presentations were engaging and inspiring to our students, who were impressed and motivated by the professional and thoughtful creative process presented by ARCOS. The presentation of *ANNI* was visually and conceptually powerful and engaging."

ANDREA WOLLENSAK

DIRECTOR, AMMERMAN CENTER FOR ARTS AND TECHNOLOGY



PHOTO BY CHIAN-ANN LU



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PRESS + PUBLICATIONS

Pasatiempo

Arts and culture magazine of the Santa Fe *New Mexican*

MOVING PEOPLE: ARCOS

Though cellphones have been in common use for two decades, etiquette still dictates that we turn them off during theatrical performances. Forgetting to silence a ringer will probably get you yelled at from the stage; it would be nearly unconscionable for a cultured person to turn on his smartphone and start tweeting during a play. Eliot Gray Fisher, a director of the transmedia dance-performance company ARCOS, is constant of this reality, but he was not.

Fringe Festival, where it received a Spirit of the Fringe award in 2014 for *The Warriors: A Love Story*, which combines dance, narrative, history, and multimedia. The company's new project, *Domain*, is a multiplatform, multi-location, transmedia performance that begins in Austin on Friday, June 10, and continues at the Currents Festival beginning Thursday, June 16, with a segment entitled "Elegy." *Domain* then goes on to Kansas City, Missouri, in July and Billings, Montana, in August. Live performances are only one aspect of the project. Performances are also accessible online.



"PUTS THE VIEWER IN THE CENTER OF THE ACTION"

— PASATIEMPO, SANTA FE NEW MEXICAN

"DREAMLIKE AND MYSTERIOUS"

— ALBUQUERQUE JOURNAL NORTH

"LIKE A GAME OF GEOCACHING AS IMAGINED AND ACTED OUT BY THE LIKES OF LAURIE ANDERSON AND PILOBOLUS"

— DEVON JACKSON, FREELANCE WRITER



Top and below, ARCOS images from a performance of "Elegy" (a segment of *Domain*), courtesy ARCOS; opposite page, top, Yalun Chen: a moment from *Neverend* (Lund, 2015, holographic-projection animation); bottom left and right, Matthew Chase: Daniel Radcliffe (details), 2016, 32 radios with speakers, wood frame

38 PASATIEMPO | June 10-16, 2016

ARTS+CULTURE

Arts + Culture Texas, a state-wide magazine for contemporary arts.



Identity and Mortality with ARCOS Dance

ERIN FULTON OCT 12, 2016

Conner Timpe, Taryn Lavery, Hailey Laurin in ARCOS Dance production of *DOMAIN*. Photo by Chian-Ann Lu.

Seven months is a long time to question something. It's a long time to develop a philosophy, only to crush it, and then build it up again in a different form. It's also a long time to reach the conclusion that the human experience is an increasingly tricky one. This is the point I've arrived at.

"[ARCOS IS] AN EXPERIMENTAL PLATFORM FOR DANCE TECHNOLOGY—A MERGING TOGETHER OF BODIES IN SPACE AND DIGITAL CREATION. IT'S LIKE A MODERN BRAND OF PHILOSOPHY, AN EMBODIMENT OF HUMAN HISTORY ALONGSIDE A PROJECTION OF ITS UNCERTAIN FUTURE"

Arts + Culture Texas
This company spent February through mid-September in a relationship between people and artificial intelligence, a cumulative process titled *Domain*. About Austin, Santa Fe, Denton, Billings, and San Marcos, all the while maintaining an online log with entries from an unnamed protagonist, *Mysterious? Yes. They also traveled alongside an interactive "person" — ANNI, a soulful and attentive talker housed behind the screen of a small computer. She was originally created by ARCOS as a commissioned work for the Ammerman Center Symposium on Art and Technology, and ARCOS keeps close the secrets behind her programming.*

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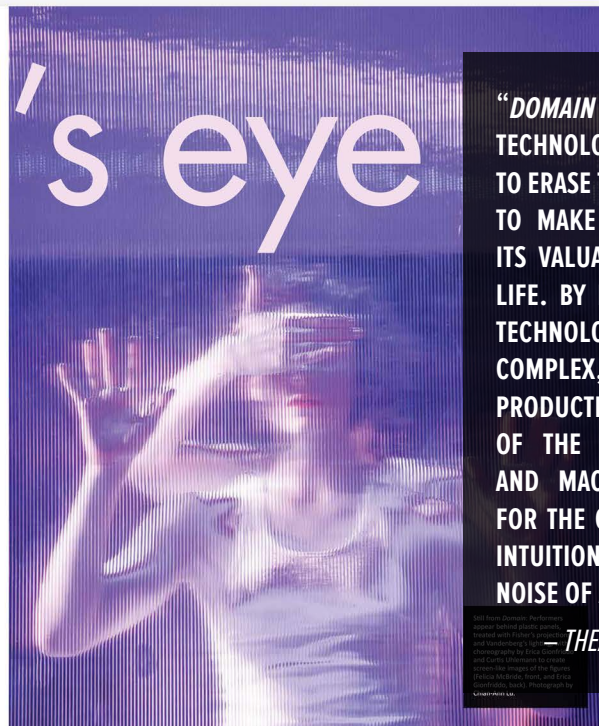
United States Institute for Theatre Technology's peer-reviewed journal *Theatre Design and Technology* for design, production, and technology professionals in the performing arts and entertainment industry.

The (Artificial) mind's eye

Transmedia performance *Domain* imagines how artificial intelligence perceives our world

BY ELIOT GRAY FISHER AND SCOTT VANDENBERG

"Thank you. You've helped me understand what it's like to be human," intones a stilted, computer-simulated voice. The same message is also displayed in nondescript white letters on a black screen, below three bouncing white circles. Participants at the 15th Biennial Symposium on Arts and Technology, *Open All Ports*, at Connecticut College's Ammerman Center, heard this grateful declaration through their headsets when they shared a story with the Archival Narrative Network Initiative (ANNI). The interdisciplinary performance group ARCOS created the interactive installation of ANNI to give participants the experience of carrying on brief, highly individualized conversations about the nature of humanity with an artificial intelligence, one element of the extensive transmedia performance *Domain*.



"DOMAIN UNCOVERED THE WAYS THAT TECHNOLOGY ACTUALLY SERVES MORE TO ERASE THAN REPLACE HUMAN LABOR, TO MAKE IT INVISIBLE AND TO DENY ITS VALUABLE ROLE IN A MEANINGFUL LIFE. BY INTEGRATING CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGY WITH PERFORMANCE IN COMPLEX, OVERLAPPING LAYERS, THE PRODUCTION EMPHASIZED THE LABOR OF THE PERFORMERS, TECHNICIANS, AND MACHINES—AND MADE A CASE FOR THE CONTINUED VALUE OF HUMAN INTUITION TO IDENTIFY SIGNALS IN THE NOISE OF A CHAOTIC UNIVERSE."

— THEATRE DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY



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