

thINKingDANCE

Upping the ante on dance coverage and conversation



Photo by Valerie Giacobbe

A-Glow at the Fringe

by Lisa Bardarson

Co-created and directed by Sarah Mitteldorf and performed by its collaborators Ashley Alter, Nina Giacobbe, Rachel O'Hanlon-Rodriguez and Samantha Rose Schwab the over-arching theme of the hour-long show *Glow* is technology's impact on humanity and how it lures us with the temptation to connect. Sadly, as the show clearly demonstrates, our fascination with technology invariably leaves us feeling achingly empty. Happily, though, this reviewer felt sated by the troupe's successful tackling of these complex social issues.

The play begins as some of the actors respond to an impersonal yet familiar questionnaire. You know the kind: name, d.o.b., email address, password, etc. When the actors are asked to describe their relationship status, things take a turn for the personal. They squirm with discomfort as they wrestle with the deeper meaning of the question. (What's your status? Married? Single? Divorced? Homeless? GLBT?) One actor responds with a hopeful and dreamy, "Yes" while another exclaims with cheery enthusiasm, "Self-sufficient but hopeful!" I enjoyed the insight into their personas revealed through their vocal energy, a quality frequently annihilated in emails, texts and Twitter posts.

In one scene, two women are in a line at Starbucks, each engaged in separate cell-phone conversations. When a predictable collision ensues the two coffee-seeking women are carried further into their separate worlds as they rant and complain to their respective half on the other end of the line. In a universe far, far away an accidental collision like this might have yielded an opportunity for an "I beg your pardon" or a tip of the hat. Instead, we see the negativity that technology can push us toward if we aren't careful.

Two other characters emerge in a verbal tearing down of one another as a third, fairy-like character attempts to stop their venomous attack. As if their putrid spew weren't enough, the actors up the ante by writing insults on each other's bodies in bold, black marker for

all to see. As witness, another dines on this visual feast while impassively eating an entire cake.

In a repeated scene, two actors wander about the stage calling out, "Hello? Hello?" They are as lost in cyber space as was Alice in Wonderland, looking for someone to connect with. Will they see the light or just the lonely glow of a cell phone?

Glow (2013 FringeArts Festival), [Kaleid Theatre](http://fringearts.ticketleap.com/glow/) First Unitarian Church of Philadelphia, September 20-21,
<http://fringearts.ticketleap.com/glow/>.

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