



# BRAVE SPACE

AN IMPULSIVE CONGREGATION  
IN THE TINIEST OF TENTS

CREATED BY  
Aloft Circus Arts

[www.bravespaceshow.com](http://www.bravespaceshow.com)



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Brave Space is the building of a blanket fort, sneaking under a hoopskirt, an impulsive congregation in the tiniest of tents. Starting as a puddle of fabric on the floor, it grows to encompass a world of wondrous human potential.

Intimate and low tech, we invite the audience to sit nose-to-nose with an all-female cast of bold physical artists to build the world we want to live in, even for only a few shared moments.



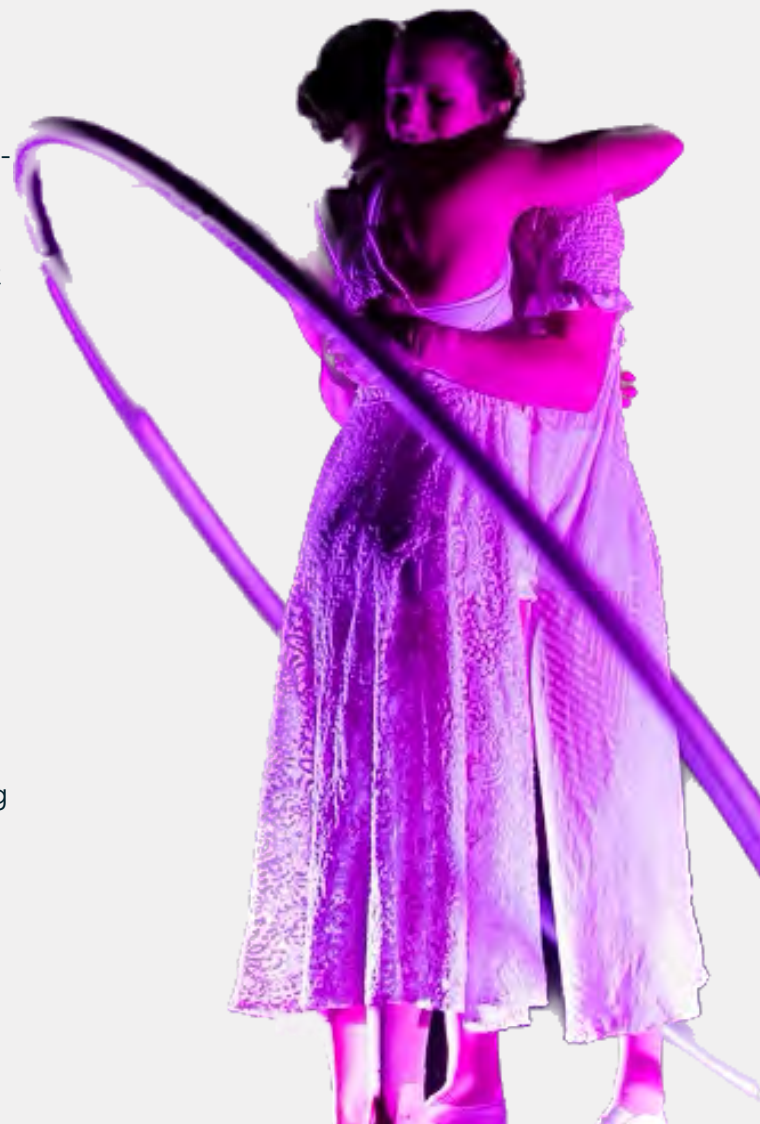
"It's truly magical. a unique edge in a genre where everyone is fighting for attention." -The Scotsman



## ABOUT THE SHOW

Inspired by the idea of creating trusting communities in trying and dangerous times, Brave Space starts as a puddle 250 yards of fabric on the floor, and, with the help of the audience, grows into a massive blanket fort--a world of hope that includes aerial arts, acrobatics, juggling and balancing on 8 ft high poles. A show that is impossible to perform without an audience, each act in Brave Space is designed to physically draw spectators into the experience of putting oneself on the line for the safety and well being of at-risk members of a community. The audience becomes a part of the show, sometimes helping to build the physical space, sometimes holding ropes that keep trapeze artists aloft, sometimes standing so close to the performers you can hear their hearts beating.

Brave Space was created as an antidote to the horrors of the daily news cycle. It's not a "safe space," but, an immersive performance that requires the audience and artists to show up as their best selves, encouraging them to care for themselves and those around them. "I wanted to create a show that felt like the opposite of the Handmaid's Tale--something empowering. I wanted to create the world I want to live in, even if it only exists for an hour at a time," director Shayna Swanson explains.



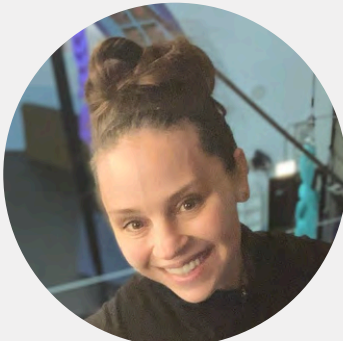
"An innovative circus show with bold and dizzying imagery."  
-The List



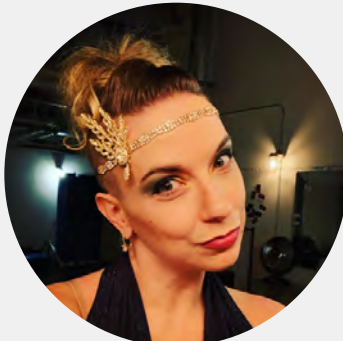
# The Team



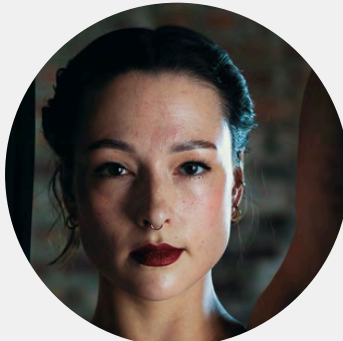
SHAYNA SWANSON  
Director/Technician/  
Tour Manager



ZOE SHEPPARD  
Performer-Cyr  
Wheel/Costumer/  
Rigger



LINNEA RIDOLFI  
Performer-  
duo sling



HEATHER DART  
Performer-  
pole



RACHEL NESNEVICH  
Performer-  
hula hoops



SARAH TAPPER  
Performer-  
equilibristic



HAYLEY LARSON  
Performer-  
duo sling

"I left with the impression that these artists wished nothing more than to share the secret to forging a space of care and connection with all of us who had come together to build that little magic tent with them." -The Pittsburgh Tattler



## TOURING HIGHLIGHTS



"I left with the impression that these artists wished nothing more than to share the secret to forging a space of care and connection with all of us who had come together to build that little magic tent with them." -The Pittsburgh Tattler



## REVIEWS

### BROADWAY BABY ★★★★★

Everything the troupe performs is completed with love and support. The performers smile broadly throughout, radiating joy, and in between movements there are hugs: are the women lovers, sisters, friends? The specifics don't matter, the love displayed is pure and unconditional. That love is shared with the audience too...the message is clear: we trust you to be a valued part of our community.



### THE GUARDIAN ★★★★★

You have heard how it takes a village to raise a child. It takes an audience to help build this astonishing, often rapturously beautiful circus show from Chicago company Aloft. The tricks never feel flashy and are performed with an easy humour, direct eye contact and a bond of confidence that blooms quickly between audience and performer. The proximity of their dusty soles and bandaged joints lets you sense, however briefly, a circus company's close-knit nature.



### THE SCOTTSMAN ★★★★★

The show itself has an ethereal quality with the all-female cast dressed, like their surroundings, entirely in white. They smile beatifically at one another before executing each manoeuvre, gently instructing us where to wriggle ourselves next. Often this involves sitting down or standing up, but on one occasion – by far the highlight of the show – we're asked to lie down and peer up, "as if watching the stars". Space is tight, but as you lay your head back and relax, looking at the two acrobats on the swing above, it's truly magical. Rarely, if ever, are we afforded this view of aerial circus work and this brief but beautiful moment is unforgettable.



## ABOUT ALOFT

Founded in 2005, Aloft Circus Arts brings heart and artistry to a performance art usually associated with physical strength and fearlessness. The resulting shows highlight more than just the physical capacity to fly, twist, balance, and spin - we celebrate the human capacity for sensitivity as well as strength, beauty as well as bravery, empathy as well as pure creative fire. Our performers are some of the premier athletes in the world, from a diverse range of circus acts - but when we work together, the stories we share with the audience are always about the feelings and experiences that unite us all. We look to have a direct emotional dialogue with our audience, and due to our accessible nature, everyone regardless of education, age, culture or background can be engaged.

Aloft has produced 8 full length shows and performed countless one-off performances around the world. Our ongoing shows “El Circo Cheapo Cabaret” and “Sanctuary” have gained a cult following in Chicago, selling out every monthly show for the last 11 years! In addition to performances, Aloft runs one of the largest circus schools in the United States, creating a training center for new artists so that we always have exciting new talent to bring our productions to life.





## SHAYNA SWANSON

Shayna Swanson is an award-winning circus artist, director and founder of Aloft Circus Arts. Her artistic work pushes the limits of physicality and emotion, described by the Chicago Reader as “truly heartfelt and creative”. As a former competitive gymnast and diver, her work naturally fuses difficulty, strength and intricacy with thoughtfulness and surprise. Shayna developed her circus voice in the land before social media, in the “Circus Wild West”, a world of shoddy trapezes hung from trees and sneaking into warehouses for shows. While she’s learned better safety practices, the punk rock ethos still nips at her heels.

Her circus choreography has been acclaimed at national and international aerial and circus festivals. Her unique rope act won the “Best Performance of Festival” Award at the 2011 American Aerial Acrobatic Festival, a Special Prize at the 2011 Circuba Festival in Havana, Cuba and was featured at the Huishan Acrobatic Festival in Taiwan and Collision Arts Asia Festival in Malaysia. She is also the 2012 US National women’s Cyr Wheel Champion. And a mom

## ABOUT THE DIRECTOR

