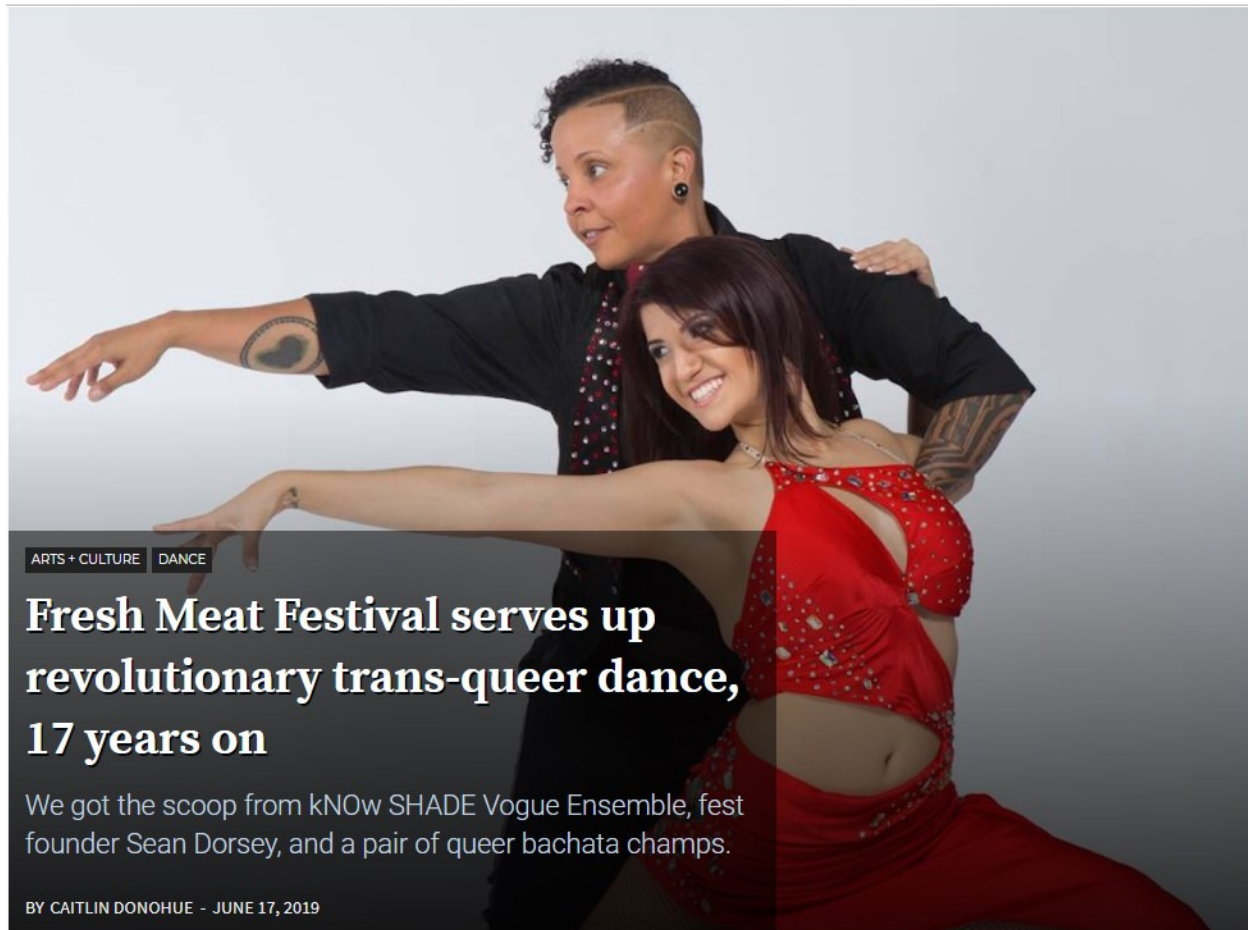


17 June 2019



ARTS + CULTURE DANCE

Fresh Meat Festival serves up revolutionary trans-queer dance, 17 years on

We got the scoop from kNOw SHADE Vogue Ensemble, fest founder Sean Dorsey, and a pair of queer bachata champs.

BY CAITLIN DONOHUE - JUNE 17, 2019

Queer bachata: Jahaira Fajardo and Angelica Medina perform at the Fresh Meat Festival.

Fresh Meat Festival serves up revolutionary trans-queer dance, 17 years on

DANCE You will not find another festival out there like this one, or at least one that has embodied the same ongoing dedication to exploring the artistic possibility that is created by the trans body. [Fresh Meat Festival](#) (Thu/20-Sat/22 at Z Space) began back in 2002, when [dancer and founder Sean Dorsey](#) was compelled to put together a gathering that honored trans artists and the exciting work they were doing in the field.

This year, Dorsey has scheduled three nights of talent. Standouts among the programming include [Ah Mer Ah Su](#)'s synthy conjuring of electro pop and deaf dancer Antoine Hunter, who back in 2017 [told 48 Hills](#) that, "It's just not about dance. It's about expressing yourself, showing your art creatively, history, background, language. We need a platform to present who we are, be heard."



AXIS Dance Company takes the stage at this year's Fresh Meat Festival. Photo by Misako Akimoto.

Some of the stars of Fresh Meat 2019 were nice enough to chat with us about what they'll be serving this year. We checked in with festival founder and dancer Sean Dorsey, Pittsburg vogue troupe kNOw SHADE, and groundbreaking queer bachata competitors Jahaira Fajardo and Angelica Medina.

SEAN DORSEY



Photo by Lydia Daniller

48 HILLS *Tell us about your 2019 curation. Were there new focuses or goals in the programming?*

SEAN DORSEY We do work to keep things fresh every year, and this year all across the US we found that artists are responding to this moment in America. It's an intense time. Our curation this year reflects intentional, intersectional thinking about our bodies, our creativity and our collective movements for justice.

48 HILLS *What are some of the artistic possibilities and opportunities that are revealed through trans dance?*

SEAN DORSEY I love being transgender; I consider it a profound blessing, and I give thanks every day for it! Trans dance is enriched by a deep, layered, complex relationship to embodiment and to consciousness that cis dance artists will never experience and can therefore never make/share. I love that the Fresh Meat Festival gets to offer this to audiences: gorgeous, deep transgender and gender-nonconforming and gender-defying dance artistry. This is what revolution looks like.

kNOw SHADE VOGUE ENSEMBLE



Photo courtesy of Fresh Meat Festival

48 HILLS *What is the most rewarding part of being a group that acts as an ambassador for vogue?*

kNOw SHADE We get to educate about ballroom, we get to showcase our talents, and we get to elevate our artform. It's a win on all sides to lead the charge on this.

48 HILLS *The most challenging?*

kNOw SHADE Schedules—in addition to being voguers, our group are working artists and leaders of organizations. We have busy people on this team!

48 HILLS *What do you see in the future for your ensemble?*

kNOw SHADE We are going to keep it hot in Pittsburgh! We would also love the opportunity to keep traveling to other cities and show what we serve on the East Coast.

JAHAIRA FAJARDO & ANGELICA MEDINA



48 HILLS *What are you excited about when it comes to queer Latin dance in the US in 2019?*

JAHAIRA & ANGELICA We are excited to see more and more queer Latin dancers dance as leaders or followers, regardless of gender, at the competition level.

48 HILLS *You created a new piece for the festival via Fresh Meat's FRESH WORKS! commissioning program. Tell us about your new piece.*

JAHAIRA & ANGELICA In Latin dance competitions, a couple is defined as a man and a woman. While there are same gender divisions, never has there been an openly queer couple doing partner work in a romantic piece. We join Fresh Meat Productions in its mission that sees art is a powerful tool for social justice and cultural transformation. This commission supported us to make a new piece that demonstrates that leading or following has nothing to do with gender. With the support of FRESH WORKS!, we continue to expand the Latin dance community and make it more inclusive for all.

FRESH MEAT FESTIVAL

Thu/20-Sat/22, 8pm, \$15 and up sliding scale

Z Space, SF.

Tickets and more information at www.freshmeatproductions.org.

READ THIS ARTICLE ONLINE: <https://48hills.org/2019/06/fresh-meat-festival-serves-up-revolutionary-trans-queer-dance-17-years-on/>