

:KQED sonic ID

[AD] K-Q-E-D logo animation white letters on black background

[AD] Captions available open and closed. Top right is the A-S-L interpreter, a deaf Southeast Asian woman. For more accessibility options visit KQED.org/kineticlight

[AD] Together two women in their wheelchairs Alice, Black and Laurel, white, fly overhead.
:Short piano notes blend with electronic and orchestral textures to evoke a sense of hope and movement

[Alice] Hi. Welcome to *If Cities Could Dance*.

We're Kinetic Light and we've been working in the San Francisco Bay Area.

[AD] Jerron, a Black man, dances on the beach, and Ed Roberts Campus

[Alice] We're here to share some of our perspectives on disability arts and our creative process.

[AD] Alice traces wires projected on a stage floor.

[Laurel] We are disabled artists making work that nobody else would make for us.

[AD] Dancing in barbed wire, Jerron turns to face Alice and Laurel who embrace inverted in their wheelchairs.

:Music slows to be more reflective

[Alice] Work that has implications for how we understand intersections of race, gender, disability, technology, design, access.

[AD] As Laurel bounces, Michael, a white man, watches intently.

[Michael] The audience is the most important member of our troupe, and in particular other disabled people.

So when we present our work, it's a two-way conversation.

[AD] Jerron rises, his palsied arm rested on his chest.

[Jerron] Kinetic Light, it's a beautiful intervention.

And I love that we use that word, because it signals that we might be obsolete in a decade. We might not be necessary. And we shouldn't.

[AD] If Cities Could Dance.

[AD] San Francisco Bay Area / Disability Arts

:Light ethereal soundscape.

[AD] An aerial view of a building with long ramps.

:Bright synths and piano chords evoke curiosity.

[Alice] We're at Z Space, and we are tucked up in the thing that people are calling bubble residences, a pandemic concept.

[AD] The group enters. In the theatre, technicians prep cable rigging.

Tiffany Schrepferman, Production Stage Manager

[Tiffany] Alice, if you could go from splat and then lightly mark your flying pathway.

[AD] Alice Sheppard Artistic Director, Kinetic Light.

Alice practices, suspended in her chair. Descending she leans and tucks. Then as she halts, her arms jut out. Michael watches.

[Alice] We are working on the final creative and technical processes for *Wired*.

[AD] The women spin in the air. On the stage floor sits a realistic theatre prop of barbed wire.

:Trickling percussion and hesitant strings evoke tension and curiosity.

[Alice] *Wired* tells the race, gender, and disability stories of barbed wire in the United States.

[Jerron] It is a heightened, dangerous, exciting work.

[AD] Jerron Herman, Dancer, Kinetic Light.

Airborne dancers stretch barbed wire elastic cord.

[Laurel] You're dangling 20 feet in the air from a rather thin metal cable.

And once you leave contact with the ground, you may have very little control.

[AD] Laurel Lawson, Dancer Kinetic Light.

She and Alice break and swing like pendulums.

[Alice] As I fly, I am experiencing my body: the power, the lightness. This body is giving me so much joy.

[AD] Alice and Laurel spin in the air stretching the elastic prop.

[AD] Berkeley, California. An Aerial view.

[Alice] The Bay Area is where I first grew into disability culture.

[AD] Inside the Campus building, on a 180 foot long 6 foot wide red spiral ramp, Alice and Laurel sail down side by side and arm in arm.

:Tender acoustic guitar, piano, and electric guitar reverb evokes warmth and reflection

:Whoosh of wheels hitting floor

[Alice] The independent living movement took its roots here in the Bay.

[AD] They dance under the ramp.

[Alice] The idea that disabled people are not medicalized bodies to be warehoused, to be closed away. That disabled people have a right to live in non-institutional spaces.

[AD] They arch up. Jerron, wide stanced sweeps an arm up.

[Jerron] Growing up, that sense of independence was a strong through line.

[AD] He bends at the waist reaching forward.

And it's still a point of pride to be from the Bay Area.

To dance in a place that heralds the actors, the organizers.

It feels like the past is moving through me.

[AD] Historical photos of civic action (on a mural wall)

[Judy] Every time you raise issues of separate but equal, the outrage of disabled individuals across this country ...

[AD] Judy Heumann, a white woman

[Judy] is going to continue, it is going to be ignited. There will be more takeovers of buildings.

:Pulsing piano keys build tension.

[AD] 504 sit in participant. News footage

:Supporters clap.

[Laurel] In 1977, the 504 protests, the disability community moved in and occupied the federal building in San Francisco.

[AD] Crowds and protest signs

[Protestors] What do we want?
Human rights!

[Laurel] Federal legislation, which protected disabled people from discrimination.

[Protestors] Sign 504!

[Laurel] After four long years of negotiation and compromise,
Jimmy Carter's administration decided to throw those regulations out.

[Protestors] (Singing) I'm not gonna let nobody turn me around,

(Singing) turn me around...

[AD] Dennis Billups 504 Sit in participant. A Black Man with a cane.

[Dennis] The more we learn about all of our disabilities inside of our own coalition,
learning sign language, learning braille, learning about hidden disabilities, we will
become a tighter and firmer group.

[AD] A hand painted "victory" sign. A crowd standing and sitting in their wheelchairs. News
headlines "Disabled protesters win some points from H-E-W" and "Califano Signs Regulations
to Ban Discrimination Against Disabled"

:Supporters clap and cheer on the protesters

[Laurel] This was the point in history that cemented the movement as a national power.

[AD] Jerron juts his fist. The ramp with the wall of photos behind it. The women wheel up it.

:Rhythmic pushing up the ramp

:Light, playful echoing synths

[Laurel] We are at home physically, in a way we are in so few other places.

[AD] They roll all the way down smiling.

The Ed Roberts Campus in Berkeley, it's among the great ramps of the world.

A ramp as a thing of beauty, not constructed as a functional object alone.

:Whoosh of wheels gliding down ramp

[AD] In line, Alice and Laurel start back up the ramp then release and slide downwards and twist. They face each other and hold hands in a spin. Straight backed they send an arm upwards, slow and open their chests. They smile.

:Piano arpeggio with solo violin and cello evokes tenderness and love

[Laurel] Places where somebody thought about me when they were designing this. That sparks joy.

[AD] From above, they dance surrounded by the curve of the ramp. Jerron joins them and slides through their joined and up stretched arms.

[AD] An aerial view of San Francisco Oakland Bay bridge onto Yerba Buena island. Then settling onto the Z Space building.

[AD] In the theatre, Laurel dives and sways over a mound of barbed wire and reaching arms wide, brings them in to her as she turns.

:Rich warm vocals soar above sparse strings

[Laurel] Access as an aesthetic, it challenges us. True artistically equitable accessibility expands the art form.

[AD] She swims in dark blue light.

For someone who is primarily non-visual, what does that dance sound like?

[Michael] When we put all of that into the work, the work gets better.

[AD] Michael Maag, Video Projection and Lighting Designer, Kinetic Light

:Playful marimba tones intertwine with dreamlike beats

[AD] Jerron in a sparkly gold and purple bodysuit hovers on cables in patterned light

[Michael] When I start working with the audio describers and they see something poetic in a movement and the way the light falls across someone's face, that informs me, what I've created, and often leads to changes.

[AD] As she propels backwards with arms outstretched, Alice skims the floor. Then, flies.

:Deep and expansive electro ambience with sparse piano

[Alice] For us, access — it is a creative force.

[AD] Alice dives to the ground and rebounds

[Alice] Once you commit to imagining a disabled audience as primary and not as incidental, it changes the understanding of the work, the insiderness. It changes the resonance.

[AD] Jerron with a wide smile, twirls in midair. Grounded he propels across the stage in turning steps and arms wrapped in wire.

[Jerron] Being a part of *Wired* has stretched me entirely as a performer.

[AD] Jerron moves deliberately, tangled in barbed wire.
:Haunting synth sirens repeat with dissonant string and horn accents

The barbed wire is reminding me that I am unsafe.

So, I have to find relief and exuberance and comedy and joy and struggle in that.

[AD] Jerron, Alice and Laurel kneel on stage costumed in black and wrapped in wire. Then similar choreography continues on the beach, they kneel with the bay at their backs. They bow to the ground. Passers by look on.

:Ocean waves hitting shore; fog horn

[AD] Jerron looks up then sweeps an arm up. He bends at the waist reaching forward. Alice smiles and with eyes shut traces an overhead circle with straight arms. She locks arms with Jerron and all three arch back with a craned neck and eyes open.

[AD] The red top of the golden gate suspension bridge pokes through the clouds which partly obscure it's vertical cables.

[AD] The theatre marquee of Z Space changes to the stage where Alice and Laurel lift off in tandem flight

:Introspective, ethereal piano melody; dark bass drone, entrancing synths

[Alice] We have been deeply careful to think through how our bodies in chairs, without chairs for Jerron, fly.

Not to use the air as an escape, but to really dig into the air as places to find queerness, disability, and race.

[AD] In slow motion, they all spiral. Alice and Laurel hold hands midair and Jerron drifts upside-down tracing a white spiral which is projected on the stage. The women in their chairs drift in circles, their arms grazing the ground as the light dims to darkness.

[Laurel] Thanks for coming along on this journey with us today, and we really hope you've enjoyed this little peek into our process and our work in progress, *Wired*.

Everyone please remember, stay safe out there.

Credits:

KINETIC LIGHT

ARTISTS

Jerron Herman, Laurel Lawson, Michael Maag, Alice Sheppard

WIRED PRODUCTION TEAM

Will Knapp, Tiffany Schrepferman, Jordan Wiggins, Catherine Nelson, Latania Brown

WIRED DESIGN

Conception and Direction

Alice Sheppard

Choreographed in Collaboration

Jerron Herman, Laurel Lawson, Alice Sheppard

Lighting, Video, Projection & Scenic Design

Michael Maag

Original Music Composition

LeahAnn Mitchell (Laurel Lawson solo)

Ailís Ní Ríain (Barbed Wire Floorwork)

Costume & Makeup Design

Laurel Lawson

Scenic & Prop Design

Josephine Shokrian

Shot on location at

Z Space, 450 Florida Street, San Francisco, CA;

The Ed Roberts Campus, Berkeley, CA

Choreography and Wired concepts © 2021

Disability Dance Works, LLC dba Kinetic Light

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Daniel A. Smith and Queer Blue Light Videotapes (1999-52),
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