

**NEW ENSEMBLE PERFORMANCE SERIES EMBRACES THE RIO GRANDE AS  
FRIEND AND COLLABORATOR**

**Albuquerque artist Rica Maestas makes their directorial debut in the public performance,  
*Laughing doesn't need your help***

**Performances**

Sunday, July 20, 2025, 11am

Sunday, July 27, 2025, 11am

Sunday, August 3, 2025, 11am

For Immediate Release

June 10, 2025



[ *Laughing doesn't need your help* event image by Rica Maestas, with photo by Stella Melina]

(Albuquerque, NM, June 10, 2025) – Premiering Sunday, July 20, 2025 at 11am, *Laughing doesn't need your help* is a new ensemble performance produced and directed by Albuquerque artist Rica Maestas. Supported by the Fulcrum Fund, a grant program of 516 Arts in partnership with the Andy Warhol Foundation, with special thanks to Black Widow Pole Arts, this contemporary dance project births performers from a murky collective unconscious into individual, looping movements that lead eventually into playful, muddy communion. This approximately half hour production will run for three total showings, staged on consecutive Sundays near [Paseo del Bosque Trail: Central Trailhead](#).

Amid the present moment of climate catastrophe, rapidly escalating administrative violence, and widespread anxiety, *Laughing doesn't need your help* is a reminder and manifestation of our inevitable movement toward each other, tenderness, and meaning. Inspired by literary references including Kaveh Akbar's acclaimed *Martyr!* and Toni Morrison's canonical *Beloved*—as well as ongoing conversations with local queer, melanated, and allied creatives—the piece envisions a cosmic pull toward connection, even when relief from everyday struggle feels inconceivable.

“In this time of social unrest and political upheaval across the country, which is designed to divide us, it's never been more critical and regenerative than now to gather with the land,” says 2025 Fulcrum Fund juror Juan Manuel Silverio. “I found Maestas' proposal compelling because the project invites people to come together to reflect collectively and heal alongside the Rio Grande river, a place of rich natural history with deep colonial wounds.”

Spectators can expect to be completely immersed in the performance, and should dress in preparation for wet or muddy conditions. Though *Laughing doesn't need your help* can be experienced either seated or standing, limited seating options will include both land and water locations. The radiating, semi-circular arrangement of chairs will situate audience members around as well as within the cast of performers, and embed them in the riparian environment that empowers, inhibits, and embellishes each performer's movements. “Anyone who attends is sure to have a joyful, one-of-a-kind viewing,” says 2025 Fulcrum Fund juror Ariana Weir-Temoshok.

Maestas, who has organized whimsical, intimate, socially-engaged programs for over a decade, developed *Laughing doesn't need your help* to enact unconditional love and generative, nuanced connection upon an uncertain future. Choreographed through a collective, improvisational process led by Julianna Massa and Stella Melina, the final work incorporates unique insights from all nine performers (Gabriel Carrion-Gonzales, Zoe Luh, Rica Maestas, Julianna Massa, Stella Melina, Paloma Navarrete, Ernestina Savage, Stacia Vu, and Hannah Yohalem), whose varied skill sets include (but are not limited to) martial arts, modern dance, art history, somatic healing, gymnastics, burlesque, Tribal belly dance, healthcare, pole dance, and community organizing. “We all have so much to contribute to each other's joy, care, and survival, the river included” Maestas says, “I hope this performance leaves both audience members and participants feeling curious about our connections to each other, and maybe even a little more hopeful.”

- Performance dates: Sunday, July 20, 2025, 11am  
Sunday, July 27, 2025, 11am  
Sunday, August 3, 2025, 11am
- Run time: ~30 minutes
- **Location:** [Sand D Beach](#) or [Mirador del rio](#), depending on water levels.  
\* Final locations will be communicated via [Instagram @ricaroux](#).  
\* Signage in both [Paseo del Bosque Trail: Central Trailhead](#) and [Tingley Beach](#) parking lots will direct viewers to the performance site on the day.
- Admission: Free, pay-what-you-wish, or suggested donation of \$10.
- Attire: Prepare for outdoor, muddy, wet, and/or uneven conditions.
- Accessibility: Both performance locations can be viewed from nearby wheelchair accessible access points, though both may require traversing dirt pathways and/or slight inclines and declines. If unfamiliar with the area, those with mobility concerns may consider bringing a helper to assist in accessing the sites more readily.
- Credits: Produced and directed by Rica Maestas  
Choreography development by Julianna Massa and Stella Melina  
Performed by Gabriel Carrion-Gonzales, Zoe Luh, Rica Maestas, Julianna Massa, Stella Melina, Paloma Navarrete, Ernestina Savage, Stacia Vu, and Hannah Yohalem  
Soundscape by Ryan Parker

### **About Rica Maestas**

Rica Maestas is a burqueñx artist and writer nurturing spaces where no one has to be whole. Inspired by home, loneliness, hybridity, and misunderstanding, Maestas makes little treasures, gifts, and offerings inviting us into dreamy and emotionally demanding spaces.

Maestas holds a MA in public humanities from Brown University and has received numerous grants for their socially-engaged projects, performances, paintings, and assemblages. Their multidisciplinary practice has included exhibiting artwork and curating independent as well as institutional projects, publishing written work in diverse forums, and participating in residencies at the Santa Fe Art Institute, Harwood Art Center, PASEO Project, and Friends of Orphan Signs. Profiles of their work have appeared in the Coastal Post, Providence Journal, Brown Daily Herald, Santa Fe New Mexican, Santa Fe Reporter, and Taos News.

They are currently producing a book of community wisdoms sourced from patrons of the International District Library as part of Risolana's inaugural Book Cohort initiative.

**About Fulcrum Fund**

The Fulcrum Fund provides grants to artists and artist collectives of \$2,000 to \$10,000. It is an annual grant program created and administered by 516 ARTS as a partner in the Regional Regranting Program of The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts. Since its inception in 2016, the Fulcrum Fund has awarded a total of \$865,600 to 344 artists, art spaces, and organizations statewide and is one of 37 re-granting programs developed and facilitated by organizations throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico.

The 2025 guest jurors included Juan Manuel Silverio, Los Angeles-based independent curator and writer; Lynn Trimble, an award-winning arts writer based in Arizona who specializes in arts and culture in the Southwest; and Ariana Weir-Temoshok, artist and arts administrator at the Oklahoma Visual Arts Coalition. A total of \$60,000 was distributed.

**About Black Widow Pole Arts**

Black Widow Pole Arts is Downtown Albuquerque's premier pole dancing studio with a mission to create grounded community through classes specializing in pole dance and sensual movement, as well as teach students of all levels and styles how to enhance and tune their energy, take up space, move with purpose and clarity, and build healthy boundaries utilizing movement and breath. Their cherished studio space and supportive team of instructors nurture an environment of fun learning, safe exploration, embodied movement, and meaningful connections.

VISUALS AVAILABLE  
FURTHER INFORMATION ON RICA MAESTAS CAN BE FOUND AT  
[RICAMAESTAS.COM](https://www.ricamaestas.com)

FOLLOW RICA MAESTAS ON [INSTAGRAM](#)

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