

Gatherings

Volume 3

Volume 3 Editors:

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Jenn Cole and Stephen Johnson

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The word '*Gathering*' refers to the coming together of people that is (most often) the pre-condition of performance. But it also refers to the accumulation of folded pages that is a necessary first step toward binding a book.

Welcome to Gatherings

Welcome to the third issue of *Gatherings*, the chapbook. If you take a look at our second issue, we did promise that there would be a third issue. ‘And there will be a third,’ we wrote, in 2019. We didn’t know at the time that the world would change between issues, and that three years would pass before we could produce the volume you’re holding in your hands. The world as we live in it, and through it, is the source of our artistic practice. The influences on the work in this volume have been immediate, visceral, as so many of the histories in and of our world have been so recently exposed—some to shrivel under the sun and in the open air, others to be articulated for once and held to account, and still others, lost and found after so many years, finally, finally provided to the world to cherish. Our complicated relationship with our many pasts has quite clearly been a part of what the contributors to this volume have wrestled with these past three years. Along with the rest of us. We see this as a strength.

Here is our statement of purpose for this series. Our chapbook is one part of a larger project to recover, explore and extend the ways we understand and work with the material objects and memories that remain after our performances end. The ethos is the same in our artistic creation and in our archival research. Persistent ideas, if we give them attention, sometimes turn material. For a long time, we have considered how many people we know in our community use artistic practices to think through their research, and suspected that some of them had visual traces of these practices they might be willing to share. Talking together over the past few years has led us to this series. We couldn’t have imagined the range of works our first and second and third calls for submissions would garner, or the versatile modes and motivations they would represent. We now reflect upon how ‘the times’ might alter the character of our work.

From photograph to poem, diagram to found materials, the works shared in *Gatherings* the chapbook offer glimpses of hard work that so often remains invisible. This gathering demonstrates the work we all do: thinking alongside our scholarship at (and in) the margins; responding to archival materials and research spaces in unorthodox ways; documenting the often artful and messy process of intellectual discovery by any means possible; and activating the body as a way of ‘thinking.’ While these methods are often treated as alternatives to academic labour, we believe otherwise. They are processes that fuel and further our work and foreground the need for artistic practice as a support for and a part of the research process. This is one of the goals of *Gatherings*. Supporting the publication of raw, unfinished, exploratory and experimental work as a performance of the research process is another.

We are honoured to present this third issue of *Gatherings*.

Jenn Cole and Stephen Johnson

Jenn Cole composed this work across Algonquin, Michi Saagig and Haudenosaunee territories. Jenn and her Nan's ancestral lands are in unceded Algonquin Anishinaabeg Kiji Sibi watershed territory.

Christine Mazumdar recognizes the Kanien'kehá:ka Nation as the custodians of the lands and waters on which she created this piece of art. Tiohtià:ke/Montréal is historically known as a gathering place for many First Nations.

Mark David Turner is from the island of Newfoundland, a part of the Canadian province of Newfoundland and Labrador. Newfoundland is the ancestral territory of the Beothuk and Mi'kmaq. Labrador is the ancestral homeland of the Inuit of Nunatsiavut and NunatuKavut, and the Innu of Nitassinan. Earlier, both Newfoundland and Labrador were the traditional territory of the Maritime Archaic and Dorset Peoples. I am grateful to the stewards of the lands, water and ice that have sustained me.

Jimena Ortuzar & Jeremy Veillard created this work in Bogotá, Colombia, on the traditional land of the Muisca people, who lived here long before the Spanish arrived 500 years ago. It is now home to at least 87 different Indigenous communities.

If A Place Can Be Made: A Textile Response
By Amy Bowring



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In June 2017, I had one of those moments in the theatre that we all crave – seeing a work that has such an impact that one continues to picture it in their mind’s eye for months, or years, pondering its characters, images, and themes. *If A Place Can Be Made*, written and performed by Diana Daly and Louise Moyes, and directed by Anne Troake, still lives vividly in my head. Like so much postmodern performance work coming out of Newfoundland and Labrador, it is a multidisciplinary piece combining theatre, music, dance, and projections. It tells the story of Diana’s Daly family and six of twelve children who were born with skeletal dysplasia making them small in stature in comparison to their six fully grown siblings. At one point, their mother, Kitty Daly, travelled to see the Archbishop in St. John’s to ask why God was giving her such small babies. The Archbishop offered her a special dispensation allowing her to stop having more children but she refused, stating: “If a place can be made, it will.”

This work continues to impact me – there is a beautiful chemistry between the performers and a reverence for the story they have been trusted to tell. As it continued to occupy my mind from time to time, I decided I wanted to experiment with a way of responding using textiles. Learning hand crafts and needlework has been part of my Newfoundland heritage, particularly as a diasporic Newfoundlander born and raised in Ontario to pre-confederation Newfoundlanders. My mother couldn’t do the various crafts her mother and sisters, and later mother-in-law and sisters-in-law did – she always joked that it was because she was left-handed – but these skills were taught to me and encouraged by my aunts and grandmothers, and I have learned other types of needlework as part of my own research into my heritage and the skills generally held by Newfoundland women.

This textile response incorporates knitting (specifically double-ball knitting and traditional colour-work patterns from Newfoundland), tatting (a type of lace making), embroidery, embroidered appliqué, stub work (where cotton or polyester batting is used to fill a piece of fabric before embroidering over it), cross-stitch (very often used in making samplers that record aspects of family history), needlepoint, bead work, and needle felting. I used the various textiles to draw out different images or moments that stayed with me and I set a few goals for myself in terms of process: use as many types of needlework as I could, use only the materials in my “stash” thus mimicking the fact that Diana calls her family “the original recyclers”, and use the Newfoundland and Labrador tartan as the main colour palette (with a couple of purposeful colour splashes). The final work definitely has a folk-art feel to it with its collage of textiles and its hand-made imperfections. For me, it encapsulates my strongest associations with the characters and performers.

1. A knitted background creates the foundation for the textile collage. All the Daly girls were taught to knit, which would have included double-ball knitting where two



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or more colours are used in an article, such as a pair of mittens. The two strands of wool create a thicker layer to keep the wind out. Many traditional patterns developed in different outports. The diamonds are a traditional pattern brought to recent popularity by knit designers Shirley A. Scott and Christine LeGrow and their collection of Saltwater knits books.

2. I remember my father teaching me the significance of the Newfoundland tartan when I was young: white for the snow, green for the pine trees, brown for the rocks, red for the blood of the soldiers lost in war, and a wee bit of yellow for sunny days. An embroidered quote from the performance sits among other embroidered stitches such as lazy daisy stitch, French knot, stars, and a chain stitch with backstitching.

3. Diana Daly plays her guitar with her accordion sitting by her stool. The figure is embroidered in backstitch, with a blanket stitch border and chain stitch affixing the felt to the backing.

4. A backstitched Louise Moyes moves delicately through the grass in bare feet evoking the wishes of the character Ann who used a wheelchair when she went out and always wondered what it would be like to run barefoot through a meadow. A blanket stitch border is complemented by three sets of running stitches.

5. and 6. Cross-stitch has long been used in samplers as young girls practiced their stitches through letters and numbers, stitching the names in a family tree and the dates of births and marriages. Practicing different kinds of borders was also an important finishing touch for a sampler. The top image of cross-stitch records the names of the 12 Daly children – Mike, Ann, Rose, Mary, Joe, and Cack were born with skeletal dysplasia. The bottom image is for practicing numbers while also recording a number relevant to the story.

7. This embroidered appliqué accordion uses backstitch, blanket stitch and French knots and is affixed with a simple contrasting running stitch. It's for the character Joe, an accomplished musician. Playing music at kitchen parties continues to be a well-loved tradition among Newfoundlanders and Labradorians.

8. These miniature needlepoint books evoke Mike's intelligence, love of literature, and his status as a Mensa member.

9. A needle-felted pansy represents the character Rose who spent endless hours sitting on the verandah cutting flowers out of greeting cards. A barbed needle is used to repeatedly stab the wool until the fibres blend and meld together creating the felt; contrasting colours provide additional details. Pinking shears create the zigzag edge and French knots affix the felt to the knitted backing.

10. Tatted lace is for Mary and Cack who were stylish and loved to sew. I imagined lace edges on sleeves and collars to dress up their blouses. They loved music and a good laugh and were groupies of the Irish revival in the St. John's music scene of the 1970s.

11. A beaded rosary symbolizes Ann's piety. She had a reputation for being a disciplinarian and was known to tap her ring on a window to get one's attention before admonishing them.

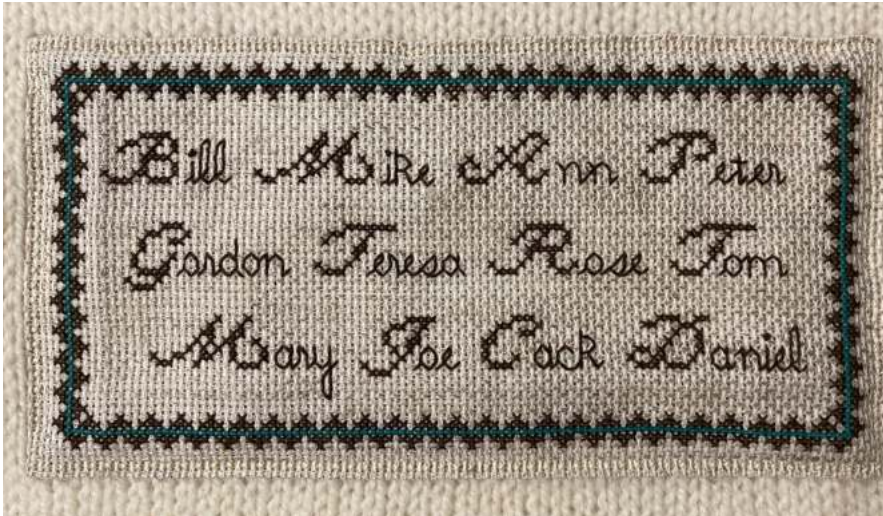
12. This embroidered appliqué tire also uses stub work to add dimension to the front of the tire. Diana and Louise tell a story about the four girls getting dressed up and having a picnic of tea sandwiches on the beach. Their brothers were annoying them so, exasperated, they uttered the common Newfoundland expression, "Frig off!" at their brothers. The brothers saw this as a call for more mischief. They found an old tire, which they filled with dung, and rolled it down a hill towards the girls completely soiling their dresses and ending their picnic. This section uses a combination of backstitch, running stitch, blanket stitch, seed stitch, satin stitch and French knot.



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Amy Bowring is the Executive and Curatorial Director of Dance Collection Danse. Her craft work frequently earns ribbons at the Orono Fall Fair – this textile won first prize at the 2022 fair. She recently designed and created burlesque pasties using traditional Newfoundland double-ball knitting for Ruralesque by Candice Pike, Josh Murphy and Hilary Knee.

About Some Lilies

By Jill Carter

*This is a creation story
a re-creation story
of a people who have survived a dry deluge:
floods of strangers pushing onto our lands
floods of waste to befoul our waters
bodies buried
bodies rising
the land cries out and says, 'no more'
Kaawiin!¹*

In 2010, I defended my dissertation in the house that Sir John A. Macdonald occupied in 1876—the year the Indian Act was signed into Canadian law. I still remember how my legs crumpled beneath me as I pushed my way up the stairs to a third-floor room wherein my defence would take place. The very weight of the stories crafted in this building— of the spirits still nesting in its walls—exerted its force on me—pushing, it seemed, against my unwelcome (still?) Indigenous body, leaving me boneless and breathless.

The house—a monument to the memory of Canada’s first Prime Minister—sits on a tree-lined street on the downtown campus of the University of Toronto. Its stolid, homely exterior and manicured grounds celebrate a proud history of nation-building as they placidly mask its position in a violent campaign of cultural genocide. To the casual passerby who stops to read the plaque upon which are engraved the names of its iron-founder builder and early owners of note, its central positioning in a tangled web of assimilative policy, land theft, racist research, child theft and abuse, eugenics, and damaging experiments on children is imperceptible. Inscribed in text that a Western eye would not recognize as ‘authorized,’ the darker history that reverberates within this sedate monument remains for many illegible and unspoken.

Perhaps, too, for the descendants of the residential school survivors—descendants whose lives are still directed to varying degrees by Canada’s Indian Act and who may carry in blood and bone the inheritance of the traumas, shame, and starvation visited upon generations of their blood relations—the history of *this place* has been

1 Carter, Jill (co-devisor /land-based dramaturg/performance director). Streaming Life: *Storying the 94*. Jill Carter et. al. Directors: Antje Budde and Jill Carter. October 2022. School of Graduate Studies. University of Toronto. <https://youtu.be/VxEpi0noKLU>

obfuscated. Perhaps, there may be a moment—while passing the house or entering it as a graduate student—that a somatic stutter occurs—a weakening of the knees, a moment of breathlessness, a sharp pain, a sudden chill, a muscle spasm or an urge to weep. The moment passes. We shake our heads, collect our thoughts, take a deep breath, and carry on.

We speak often about the connection that exists between Indigenous people and our ancestral lands. As Guna-Rappahannock theatre worker Monique Mojica reminds me, the very act of re-presenting our bodies on these lands and re-asserting that connection is a revolutionary act (Personal Communication). But revolutionary acts carry a cost: there is a tension that exists between the apprehension of connection with one’s ancestral territory and the embodied experience of disconnection—an epigenetic amputation wrought by colonial violence (Green 82; Deloria Jr. 62; Simpson 43; Castillo 57-58).² There are moments—even as we traverse paths worn into the land by our forebears—that the world tilts and our legs collapse beneath us as the earth shudders with the aftershocks of remembered colonial violence.

“What did you do, John?”³

What indeed?

Such tensions, of course, are as necessary as they are unavoidable. We, *all of us*, are peoples in need of transformation, healing, and relational repair. Kinship relations between Indigenous peoples and between Indigenous peoples and the non-human world require renewal. And if these rejuvenated relational ties are to hold, the historically fraught relations between Indigenous peoples and those heterotopic humans who have learned to call these lands ‘home’ must also undergo transformation and repair (Donald 53).⁴ Ultimately, as Mestiza scholar Gloria Anzaldúa has reminded us, a “pulling of flesh” is required if our souls are to be transformed (qtd.in Cooperman 23).⁵

2 Green, Christopher T. “Anishinaabe Artists, Of the Great Lakes: Problematizing the Exhibition of Place in Native American Art.” *ARTMargins* 4.2: 2015. 80-96. Deloria, Vine Jr. *God Is Red: A Native View of Religion*. North American Press, 1994. Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. U. of Minnesota Press, 2017. Castillo, Maria Regina Firmino. “Dancing the Pluriverse: Indigenous Performance as Ontological Praxis.” *Dance Research Journal* (Special Issue: Indigenous Dance Today). 48.1: (April 2016). 55-73.

3 Moyan Trina (co-devisor /performer). *Streaming Life: Storying the 94*. Jill Carter et. al. Directors: Antje Budde and Jill Carter. October 2022. School of Graduate Studies. University of Toronto. <https://youtu.be/VxEpi0noKLU>

4 Donald, Dwayne. “We Need a New Story: Walking and the wâhkôhtowin Imagination.” *Journal of the Canadian Association for Curriculum Studies (JCACS) La Revue de l’association canadienne pour l’étude du curriculum (RACÉC)*. 18.2: (2021). 53-63.

Streaming Life: Storying the 94 is a project that emerged from such tension—from the tension between the apprehension of Indigenous connection to ancestral homescapes and a sudden somatic alarum that signaled (for me) an epigenetic rupture—a breakdown of discourse. It rises from an evolving preoccupation with the relationship between the stories carried in the Indigenous body and the stories buried beneath repurposed, cosmetically developed, depleted, befouled or discarded earth. The company that devised and *Streaming Life: Storying the 94* is comprised of Indigenous and non-Indigenous artists and researchers, engaged in land-based practices through which the artist-researcher’s body becomes the site of encounter between place and story and the vessel through which that encounter is expressed. *Streaming Life* is the first of a series of land-based truth activations we hope to develop on storied campus lands and across the GTA. We seek, thereby, to develop a process of re-worlding—a non-invasive, non-extractive exercise in “somatic archeology” (see Gibson)⁶ through which to re-presence a seemingly neutral plot of *terra nullius* marked by the force of colonial occupation—a force that continues to reverberate through Indigenous blood, bone and memory today. As we continue to develop the series, we are gradually curating a hybrid process of creation and performance—a process grounded in land-based dramaturgical principles and Indigenous storyweaving methodologies through which the human and non-human subaltern might speak.

Rooted in storied land, the project has offered its Indigenous devisors an opportunity to recover and give voice to insupportable truths long interred beneath a manicured landscape, to repair frayed connections, and to intervene upon epigenetic trauma by touching the earth wherein those traumas are rooted. Working in parallel fashion and opening itself to tense encounters with the difficult knowledge-sets embedded within those fraught histories, the non-Indigenous bodies within this project have utilized this opportunity to intervene upon what Stó:lō scholar Dylan Robinson terms “intergenerational perpetration” by acknowledging and responding to a call for personal accountability and re-dress (63).⁷

5 Cooperman, Hilary. “Listening through Performance: Identity, Embodiment, and Arts-Based Research.” *Creating Social Change Through Creativity: Anti-Oppressive Arts-Based Research Methodologies*. Eds. Moshoula Capous-Desyllas and Karen Morgaine. Springer International Publishing AG, 2017. 19-35.

6 Gibson, Ruby. *My Body, My Earth: The Practice of Somatic Archeology*. iUniverse,

7 Robinson, Dylan. “Intergenerational Sense, Intergenerational Responsibility.” *Arts of Engagement : Taking Aesthetic Action in and Beyond the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada*. Eds. Keavy Martin, et al. Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2016. 52-75.

*Your chickens have come home to roost, Sir John–
Children of Sir John,
Ehhhhhhh.*

*Oh! Canada...
Your chickens have come home to roost.*

*And the nest is empty
The nest is broken. (Carter, Streaming Life: Storying the 94)⁸*

Our practice is the practice of bringing the “undercommons” into a public common and performing (hereon and herewith) our own collaborative “study” to reveal the crafty mechanics of a time-honored, institutionally-dramaturged “performance.” The undercommons, as conceived by Stefano Harney and Fred Moten, is at once a rehearsal studio (107); a theoretical lens; a space of ontological reversion (110); and a space in which racialized (and too-oft, excluded) bodies may gather and enjoy study, reflection and conversation (110)⁹. The land (which includes the house, its foundations, its lawn, gardens, the creatures who frequent those gardens, carriage gates of rusting iron, failing cedar, and the buried waters flowing within its environs) assumed the role of neither inspirator nor backdrop. Rather, the land asserted itself as both living archive and creative partner, calling out to us through the somatic stutter, through new growth or decay, through traces of encounter with campus workers, denizens, and visitors. It demanded of us frequent visits, deep listening, intent reading, and an unresistant opening to the subtle tug it exacted on the artists’ flesh, memory, and conscience. Itself an excluded body –silenced and refashioned–it conversed with us within the undercommons, inviting our response through stories nesting in our own bones and blood and tissues. This edifice of stone and glass (with all its accoutrements) activated its own truth, as we, the company of devisors, offered ourselves as vessels through which that truth might be communicated, as books in which a tangled history might imprint itself and be read.

The fragment of verse offered here is the first of a series of stuttered responses tugged from my core by a digital tracing that holds two seemingly mundane signs offered to settler scholar-artist Dr. Sherry Bie, co-devisor and vocal performer in this project. Observing social distancing protocols over the summer of 2021, the creative team conducted visits to the grounds of Sir John’s former home severally or in small groups and shared the calls and provocations that had resonated with us in

8 Carter, Jill (co-devisor /land-based dramaturg/performance director). *Streaming Life: Storying the 94*. Jill Carter et. al. Directors: Antje Budde and Jill Carter. October 2022. School of Graduate Studies. University of Toronto. <https://youtu.be/VxEpi0noKLU>

9 Harney, Stefano and Fred Moten. *The Undercommons: Fugitive Planning and Black Study*. Minor Compositions, 2013.

digital spaces of gathering. These calls included a traditional story told to us by the late Stó:lō/Cree-Metis artist and educator Lee Maracle; fragments of parliamentary speeches and legislation; headlines and images gathered during our research. And when the land gifted any of us with a hint, a sign or provocation, we carried these precious calls back to the group without interpretation or embellishment, offering them up for contemplation and response. Sometimes, it was as if the land were speaking through the human actor. At other times, these calls provoked a psycho-spiritual stutter, stirring personal or ancestral stories to the surface.

Sherry Bie had spent much of Canada Day 2021 at Toronto's Nathan Phillips Square. Instead of red and white pageantry and unabashed celebrations of nationhood to which most Canadians have become accustomed, the Square teemed with orange shirts. Today, it seemed, the denizens of this wealthy metropolis, resting uneasily upon the shaky foundations of a fraudulent 'purchase' and violated treaties, had called themselves to account, as they reflected upon the hundreds of unmarked graves that had been recently located on the grounds of several Canadian residential schools. Afterwards, travelling homewards, Sherry decided to visit the house from which all of this—a young nation, the Residential School System, frauds, theft, and murder—had been set into motion. Perhaps, Sherry felt a tug—a subtle pulling of the flesh? I don't know. I never asked. But somehow, I like to imagine that this is the way it was. Here on the manicured landscape of this young nation's progenitor, the land had her own story to tell—her own song to sing to mark Canada's birthday. Her front garden teemed with a riot of orange day lilies.

And, of course, there was a stutter...

On the stone walkway leading to the home's front door, there lay, a broken birds' nest—likely knocked from the eaves by a zealous groundskeeper, perhaps the same groundskeeper who had bedded that orange riot in front of this historic marker of Canada's shame.

What were we to make of these signs? The lilies? The nest? Had the lilies been chosen and placed as a performance of solidarity (or perhaps apology), which was somehow undermined by the remnants of a violent eviction? Had they been chosen and placed as neutral horticultural performance devised to communicate order and welcome, which was (again) being undermined by the evidence of violent eviction? Regardless, an unpalatable truth erupting from the undercommons had presented its encoded self in the public common to be witnessed, acknowledged, recounted and answered. As seasons change, this storied land will continue to bring forth new signs, inviting the fleshly archive into collective engagement with itself—a living archive in which the residue of hard power, once exerted (and largely erased from collective memory), continues with studied guile to exert its damaging force. The violent eviction continues...

*Your chickens have come home to roost, Sir John–
Children of Sir John,
Ehhhhhhh.*

Oh! Canada...

Your chickens have come home to roost.

And the nest is empty

The nest is broken.

*On Canada's birthday, this historical monument is clothed in orange lily shirts–
Clothed in its own shame.*

*On Canada's birthday, a sea of orange shirts floods Nathan Phillips Square
And here?*

Right here?

In this lovingly preserved monument to a nation's pride?

*An empty, broken nest greets the nice visitors as they stroll down memory lane
154 years towards a glorious future...*

From this historical monument,

This carefully preserved nest,

Forceful fingers reached out

To pluck our children from their own nests

To carry them far from the "influence of the wigwam."

Far from a mother's love.

Far from her soothing songs.

Far from her busy hands.

Far from the fish broth and wild rice,

She so lovingly prepared,

She so lovingly prepares,

For when her chicks–her dear ones–come home again to roost

From this historical monument,

This carefully preserved nest,

Forceful fingers of nationhood

Reached out to snatch the land

To confine its rightful stewards within teeny-tiny spaces

To quell a people's prayers

And manacle the dancers' legs

In this historical monument,

*This carefully preserved nest of nationhood,
Your chickens have come home to roost*

*A shirt of orange lilies.
An empty, broken nest...*

And by the way...

*How is your nest holding up?
Who is raising your children?
Who is shaping their minds far from the reach of your “wigwam?”*

Are they safe?

Are they free?

*Did you think that what happens to us could never touch you?
Did you think that what touches my children could never touch yours?*

Think again.

*Clothe yourself in orange!
Cover yourself in shame!*

*Tell us, again, how sorry you are.
How it's time to forgive.
How it's time to move on.*

Light a candle in Tofino...¹⁰

*Then, hang a neon heart in your front window
To call your children back
To an empty, broken nest.*

10 A bleak (perhaps, for some, oblique) reference to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's actions on Canada's first National Truth and Reconciliation Day (30 September 2021). Ignoring an invitation from leaders of the Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc First Nation to attend a ceremony dedicated to the residential school students whose unmarked graves had been discovered earlier that year, Canada's elected leader chose to holiday in Tofino with his family. When he was criticized by outraged Indigenous leaders for this tone-deaf performance, Trudeau announced that he would observe the day by lighting a candle in his rented holiday house.

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Based in Tkaron:to where she was born and largely raised, **Jill Carter** is an Anishinaabe-Ashkenazi theatre-practitioner, researcher and educator at the University of Toronto.



Clothe yourself in orange!
Cover yourself in shame!

Tell us, again, how sorry you are.
How it's time to forgive
How it's time to move on

Then, hang a neon heart in your front window
To call your children back
To an empty, broken nest.



Braiding Eternity

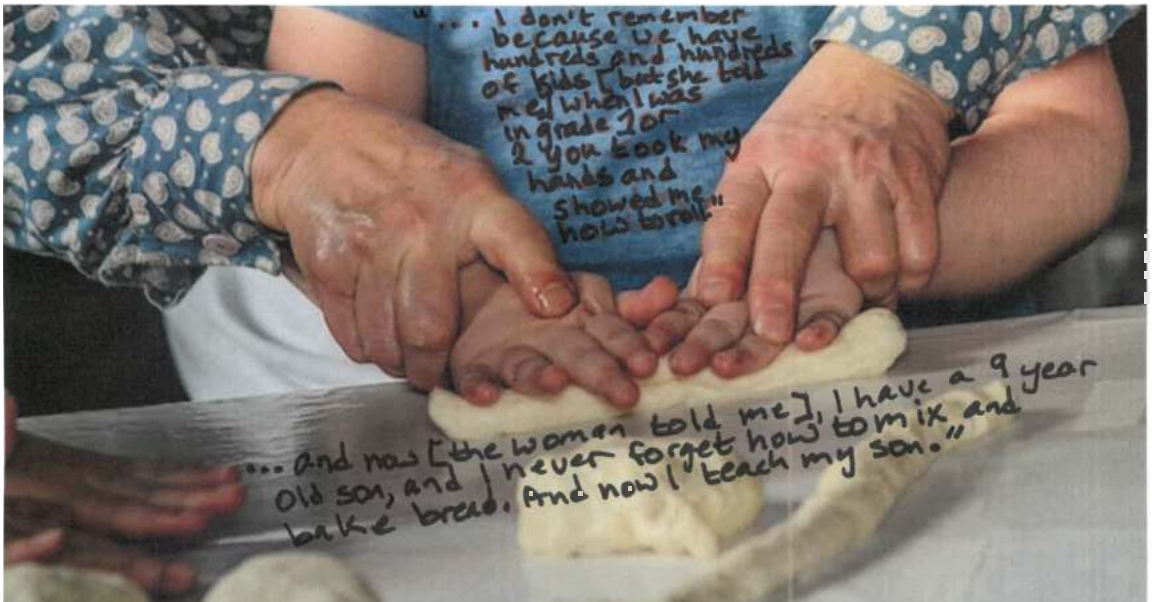
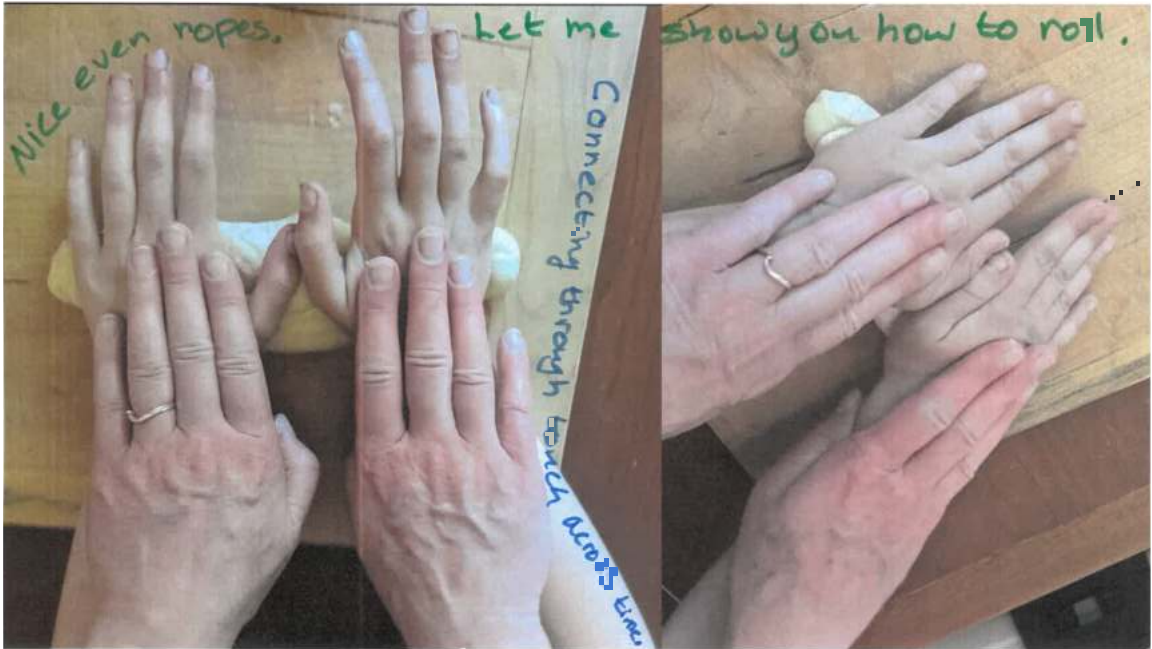
By Heather and Celeste Fitzsimmons Frey

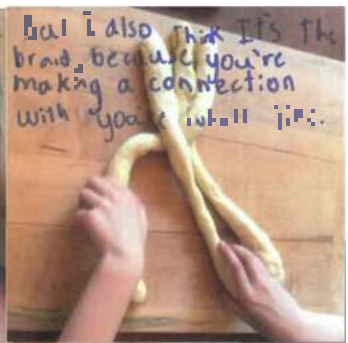
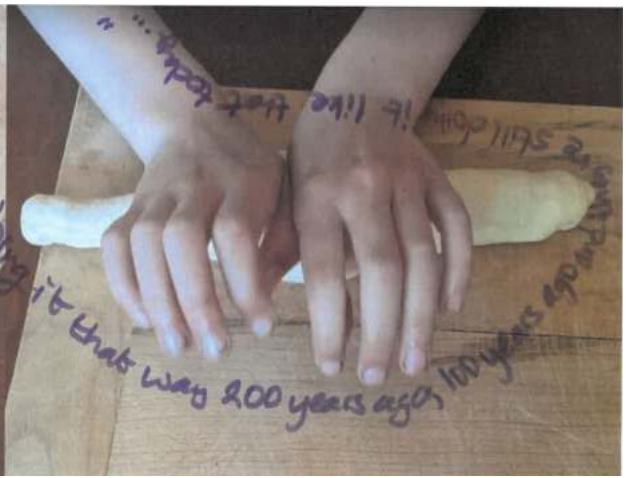
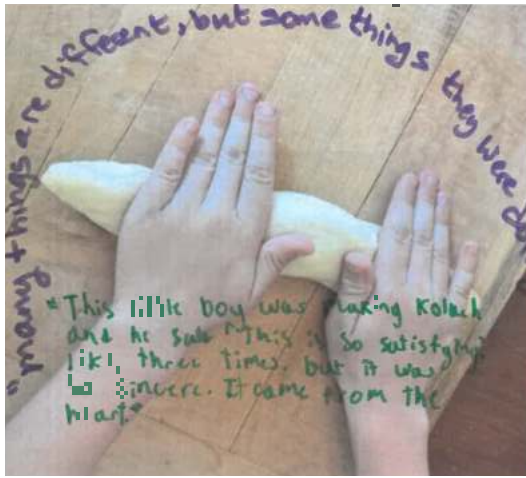
Celeste and Heather were inspired by Heather's experience of learning to make kolach, a braided Ukrainian Christmas bread. As part of her exploration of performance, historically-dressed interpreters, and youth engagement in living history museums, Heather learned to make kolach in November 2021 at the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village during a field trip with a grade 3 class. Kolach includes the word *kola* (circle), and each of the strands represents ancestors, family, and children. Celeste and Heather discussed the significance of hands, family, connection, intergenerational knowledge sharing through touch, and our own practices. We wrote our own reflections onto the photographs, and selected excerpts from interviews with two Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village interpreters. These excerpts are represented with quotation marks. Three photographs are courtesy of the Ukrainian Cultural Heritage Village, and feature one of the interpreters we interviewed. The other photos are by Heather or Rod Fitzsimmons Frey. The hands in the photos we took are Heather's, Celeste's, and Piers Fitzsimmons Frey's (age 7). Celeste and Heather created 'Braiding Eternity' to reflect on care, embodied archives and knowledge, and to share an experience together. Celeste explains "It was so lovely to connect with family through baking, and to understand what it means to connect to generations of bakers caring for each other. Kneading dough always feels like caring for someone else to me. Now it also feels like caring for everyone and being cared for, in multiple generations, to continue the circle."

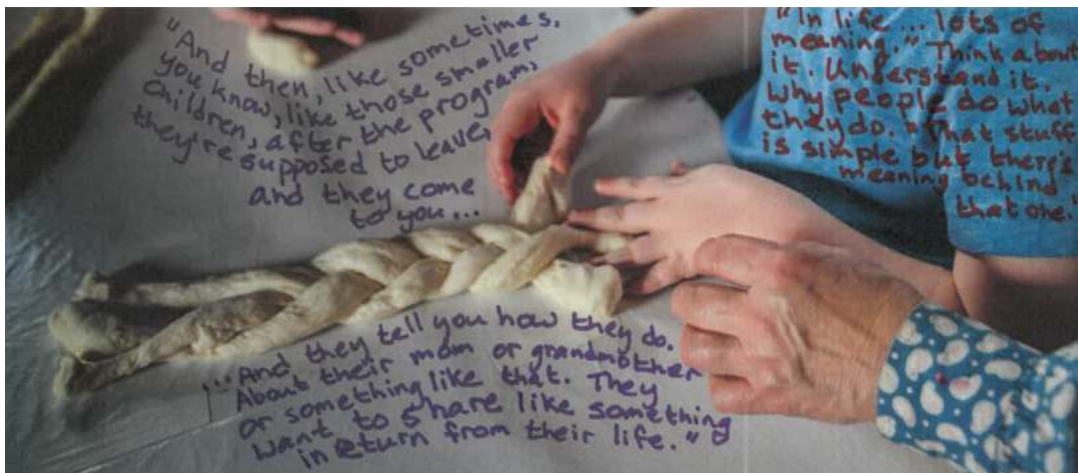
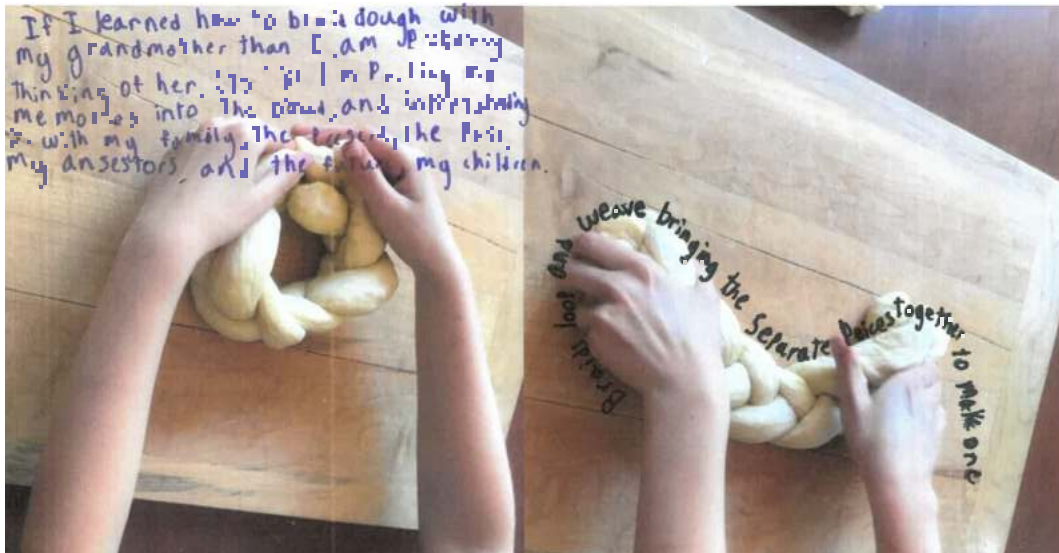
Heather Fitzsimmons Frey is an Assistant Professor of Arts and Cultural Management at MacEwan University in Edmonton. Her current Gatherings research focus is youth engagement in living history museums.

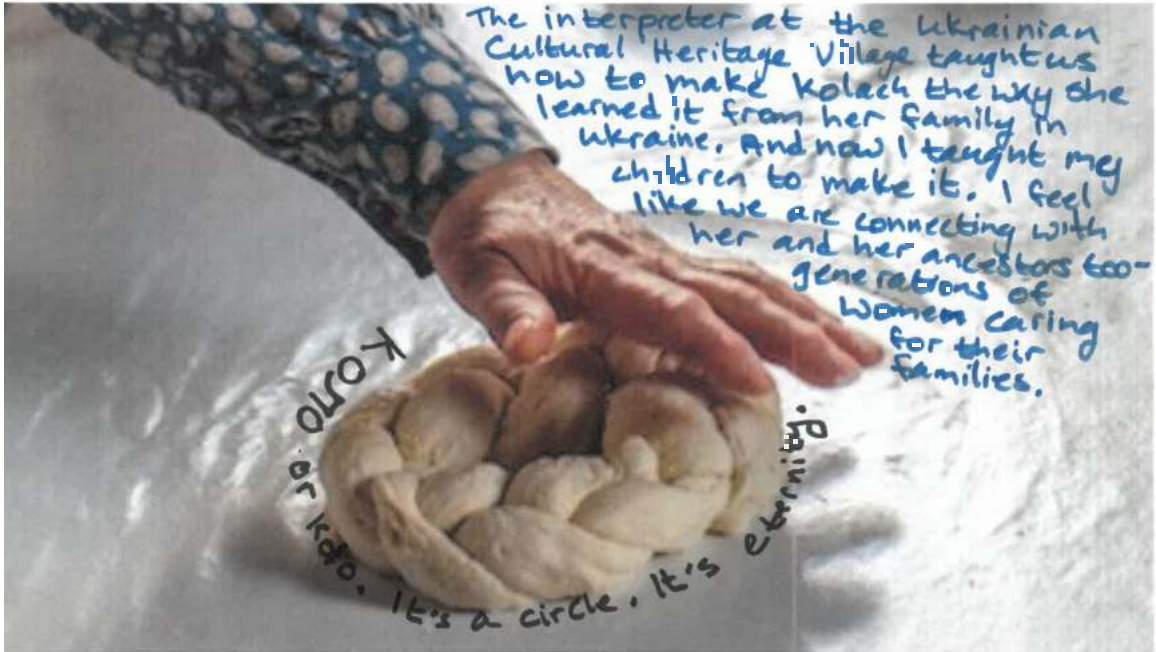
Celeste Fitzsimmons Frey is 10 years old and is Heather's daughter. She is an historically dressed volunteer at Fort Edmonton Park on 1885 street, and is in French immersion. She is also a story writer, and a baker.









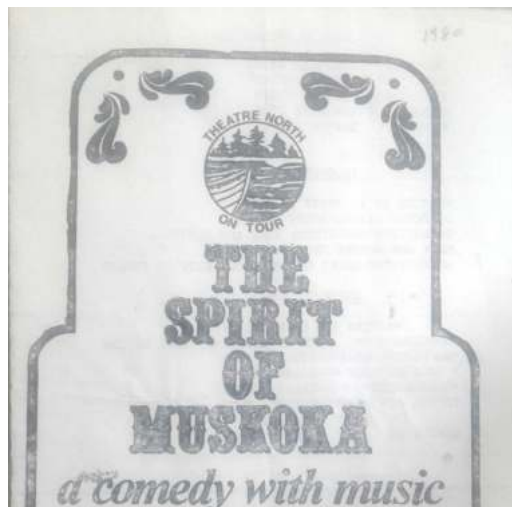


All the World's a Lake

by Martin Julien

For two summers in 1979 and 1980, my high school 'summer job' was touring theatre around Muskoka Ontario by canoe. Theatre North, founded by Huntsville resident Jerry Prager, was a shoestring operation that survived on grit, passion, hope, and youthful naivety. Our small troupe of players paddled our homemade offerings around the once-ubiquitous vacation resorts and lodges of North and South Muskoka, as well as to community centres and church basements (where we often collapsed for the night in our sleeping bags!). For our second season, the ambitious play-within-a-play *The Spirit of Muskoka* was our calling card, combining local historical narratives—from pre-contact Indigenous activities to Tom Thomson's Algonquin Park adventures to Dr. Norman Bethune's Gravenhurst roots—with a meta-theatrical tale of a group of young actors rehearsing their show. For me, the highlight of the project was *actually* rehearsing at the Native Canadian Centre, recently re-located to 16 Spadina Road in Toronto. Space was donated to us by James Buller, who had founded the Native Theatre School (later the Centre for Indigenous Theatre) in 1977. One of his students, Lorraine Finn, was a member of our cast. Though I long ago lost touch with Lorraine, I will never forget the spirit, generosity, and talent that she and James gifted to our troupe of young settler artists in 1980.

Martin Julien is a professional actor, singer, and playwright, dating back to his childhood in the 1970s. He is also a researcher of veteran theatre makers' stories and histories in the land now called Canada.



My mother's family history was mysterious, the subject of contradictory stories and/or sudden refusals to spill the beans, but during the lockdown in 2020, while live elders were locked away, many records were scanned and made available to the public. A few minutes of searching brought a wealth of details. My great, great, great, great grandmother's life was especially well-documented. She is often mentioned in the proceedings of the Old Bailey. At times, she is indistinguishable from her namesake. There are scanned versions of all the trials, which read like brief plays with the dramatis personae listed at the start. Between them, the two women played all the roles: witness, victim, defendant, except that one was deported for the theft of a gown and died in the Cascades Female Factory prison in Tasmania, while the other lived out her days in Saffron Hill, London, the setting for *Oliver Twist*. The Saffron Hill Hannah's testimony put several men behind bars.

The judges and lawyers in these cases are frightening for their powers to end a life or render it infinitely miserable, but they also act as both audience and scribes to an ongoing series of dramas. They and their powers are weapons that the petitioners who come before them use against each other. People are alternately stealing from, beating up or accusing – quite possibly framing – one another, all aspects of all stories sounding equally spurious. Everyone is drunk, all the time. No one can properly remember what happened. This is performed crime, crime of dissembling, of invention. Hannah's life was documented, alright. And not just her birth and marriage and death, not just the births of her children, but her words.

Maria Meindl recently completed her PhD at the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies at U of T. She also writes books, teaches movement classes, and organizes a literary reading series in Toronto.

my idea of performance is not your idea of performance

Jimena Ortuzar and Jeremy Veillard

This work began as a collaboration between Jeremy and I in the hopes of contributing to the third edition of the Gatherings chapbook. Its point of departure was a shared desire to explore the connections between the very different paradigms of performance we each experience and engage with in our work. Jeremy is a global health expert who specializes in the performance of health systems and services, and I, a performance studies scholar, understand performance as a social and aesthetic practice. Jeremy has worked with various governments in countries across the Americas and globally to improve and expand healthcare access while I have studied performance as a means of expression and vehicle for political engagement throughout the hemisphere. Jeremy is now focused on migrant populations while I have been reflecting on my own migrant journey from one corner of the hemisphere to another. After living in Turtle Island for many years, we have recently moved south to a land known as Colombia, a country reckoning with a brutal history of violence and coping with the reality of having nearly two million migrants from neighbouring Venezuela. Movement, migration and the collective memory of this peculiar place are thus an integral part of this collaboration as we reflect on being here at this particular juncture.

One of the main reasons we are here is indeed the migrant crisis, with Jeremy's work aiming to better the lives of migrants in very tangible ways, namely by supporting the government of Colombia in ensuring the social and economic integration of migrants in the country. For example by financing the affiliation of 225,000 migrants to the social security system and the vaccination of over 1 million migrants against COVID-19, helping the government provide migrants with access to legal status, and negotiating the first ever loan focused exclusively on migrants (for 500 million USD). This work is based on solid research and analytical work showing that for every dollar invested by the government of Colombia on migrants, two dollars of return will be generated for the Colombian economy. This is what performance means in the practice of a global health specialist: more people with access to care, and with access to vaccines. Yet, this practice fails to recognize the harsh reality that migrants face—this is something we experience painfully on a daily basis as we encounter young migrant families in the streets of our privileged neighbourhood, families who call on us to 'collaborate' in ways that contribute to their daily survival on this land. The data quickly fades away and the lives behind the numbers emerge.

Being here also means recognizing the colonial history of a country obsessed with gold over the ages and the political realities of a society marred by decades of armed conflict and drug trade. As new buildings go up in our neighbourhood, we watch from our window the slow disintegration of a house that once belonged to a notorious drug lord. Ransacked by *guaqueros* searching for secret coves full of gold and cash, only ruins remain of the mansion—ruins that remind us of a long history of pillage in this land fueled by legends of buried treasure and lost cities made of gold. That the house is hidden from public view by an imposing stone wall that runs along the length of an entire block only adds fire to the ruinous fantasies surrounding the property. We are privy to this sight by virtue of living in (and being able to afford to live in) an apartment overlooking the wooded area in which the remnants of this house rest. But we are also witnessing these urban ruins before their disappearance: the property has now been sold to the Chinese government with plans to demolish the area and build a new embassy. It's a reminder that in real estate the value of ruins is not in the past but in future opportunities for profit.

We've tried to capture our experience of these parallel realities and their fleeting temporalities, first in a poem written by Jeremy with the title "Este sistema no se puede reformar" (this system cannot be reformed), which comes from graffiti we've seen in the streets of Bogotá. I followed with a response that evolved over time. First, I did some research: I looked into the practice of *guaquería** when the country was a Spanish colony, the origins of the myth of El Dorado, and the history of the ruins we see from our window—once a hidden oasis in the midst of urban sprawl. Meanwhile I walked around the impenetrable wall, thinking of our fellow performance artist Didier Morelli and his repeated attempts to walk through a wall. I listened to the stories of the migrant families I met in the street and responded to their demands. I then spent time with a printed copy of the poem. I wrote on the margins and circled key words, resisting the desire to explain every word on the page and ignoring the impulse to provide more context for the reader. It became clear to me that I needed to transform the pages of the poem, that I needed to respond with actions more than with words.

The result was a series of small interventions that respond to the 'here and now' of this place, gestures that in some ways reflect the risk of being forgotten and the potential to persist in some shape or form. The poem was turned into ashes—a way of thinking about a 'here' that is somewhere between remembering and forgetting. I did this by setting the pages of the poem on fire (in our kitchen sink) and carefully collecting the ashes. Some of the ashes were blown over our balcony towards this unreachable land where the ruins lie for the time being. Others were put in tiny glass bottles and placed along the cracks in the wall where they still remain today. I

made no attempt to walk through the wall; instead, I whispered through its cracks and walked around it, this time marking its lengthy perimeter with red wool. The migrant families we meet regularly do not appear in this collaborative work. We offer instead the place of encounter, the place that different families occupy (depending on the time of day and day of the week) and where we stop each day to listen and to collaborate. All photos were taken by Jeremy.

*there is no exact translation for this term but it refers to graverobbing, looting, plunder, pillage, etc.



Este sistema no se puede reformar

we come from a country made of gold

Zipa was covered in gold dust when he immersed himself in lake Guatavita

the quest for gold stole the soul of our people

el dorado is not a man or a city or a kingdom or an empire it is our doxa

the gold is gone but there is more gold the new gold is cocaine

Zipa is Gonzalez Rodriguez Gacha a.k.a Gacha a.k.a el mexicano now covered in cocaine dust

immersed in lake Guatavita

i will pay for the external debt of the country eradicate poverty not too fast the army killed him

now he is gone but others took over not to worry we dug for gold for centuries

Gacha left his mansion

unattended confiscated soon looted destroyed by hand every stone will be turned
over because there might be gold
or tunnels leading to wealth and wealth is good for generations in our country
there was nothing of course now only ruins remain
migrants come from another country where our people sought refuge
now it is their turn to come by the millions
pure statistics
invest one dollar in your migrant and you get two dollars of economic return
give him access to social services housing health care education
it is good money it makes good economic sense
put him to work vaccinate him integrate him if you can
not so fast what does that mean even
it is good performance by the textbook lots of evidence no arguing
but what does that even mean
to my neighbor who is not my neighbor because he has no home for him and his
child
i talk to him every day his home is the corner of my street
i ask him how he is doing give him money when i have money in my pocket
i don't always have money in my pocket cash is so twentieth century
he doesn't know what performance means to me
it means a million shadows all the invisible labor put to work
it makes good economic sense
better than the tiresome performance of the migrant body
wandering down the street
asking me if i would like to collaborate what does that even mean
it means working together says my son he is so wise already
one day there is no more performing of the migrant body
i am told by my neighbor
the housing situation the loneliness the uncertainty the anxiety the hopelessness
him and his ten-year old son alone in the city for a thousand days
i am told by a woman on the street
how she lost her job and how she doesn't know where she is going to sleep tonight
with her baby and no one to hold her at night; if only she could go home but she
can't go home she is stuck with no hope what is she going to do anyway so she cries



and what can i do
our two solitudes are colliding at the surface of the world
este sistema no se puede reformar
my country is made of gold who knew migrants were the new gold
the writing on the wall haunts me
este sistema no se puede reformar
my idea of performance is not your idea of performance
decrypting the migrant body matters you tell me
you must understand all the hurt
i bear my own burden is this how we collaborate how we work together
how we overcome our solitudes
we bear our own burden until we can bear each other's burden







Jimena Ortuzar is a postdoctoral fellow with Hemispheric Encounters at York University's School of the Arts, Media, Performance & Design. Her research and writing explore transnational labour and migration through the lens of performance and gender studies.

Jeremy Veillard is a global health expert leading health sector reforms financing at the World Bank for Colombia and Mexico. He is also a scholar and educator at the Dalla Lana School of Public Health at the University of Toronto where he teaches global quality of care. Jeremy has recently published his second volume of poems, *Trompe-le-monde*, at LGR editions in Paris, France.

Brass for Northern Labrador

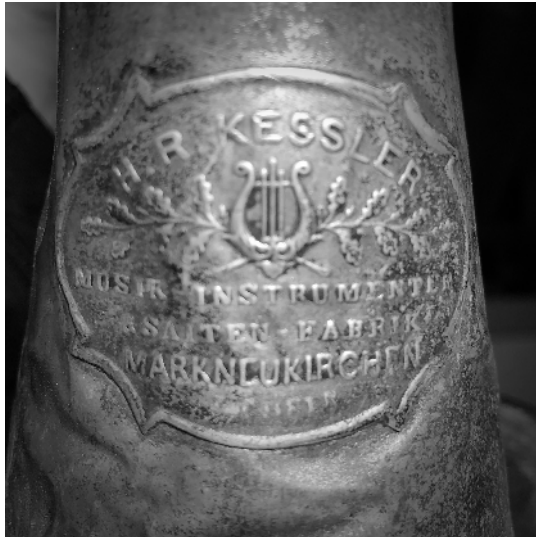
by Mark David Turner

Mark David Turner is a cultural historian and facilitator working at the intersection of media, performing arts and archival practice in the Northwest Atlantic and Circumpolar North.

In 1771, Moravian missionaries built a station in what is today the Inuit community of Nain in northern Labrador. There, on April 7th, 1776, the first public performance of brass instruments was given by the Danish-born Kalaallisut-speaking missionary, Jens Haven (1724-96). By 1821, Inuit-led instrumental ensembles were welcoming visitors to Nain as well as new stations in Okak and Hopedale. Between 1830 and 1896, bands were also formed in Hebron and Makkovik. Ubiquitous on Labrador's north Coast, brass bands became essential community features, performing as much in secular as sacred contexts. Today, the tradition continues in Nain, Hopedale and Makkovik, three of the five communities of Nunatsiavut.

Throughout most of the 200-year history of Labrador Moravian Inuit brass bands, instruments were difficult to come by. Until 1926, most instruments were shipped from Europe during seasonal visits by the Moravian mission ship, *Harmony*. After, ships operated by the International Grenfell Association, Newfoundland Government and others carried instruments sent from the USA and Canada. Northern Labrador's relative isolation means that unless they were destroyed or removed, many instruments remain in the region. This gallery presents imagery of maker's marks from historic instruments in Hopedale and Makkovik. Stamped on the bell, these marks tell us who made the instrument, where it was made, and, on occasion, provide information about the model.









Somatic Impressions: Body Work is The Work

By Jess Watkin

During the Pandemic, Dr. Petra Kuppers, wonderful Disabled artist and scholar, ran a few somatic movement research workshops through the MELT research institute. I attended two: Space; and Monsters. The following entries capture my writing from my experiences of moving together virtually with other Disabled dancers and allies. Gratitude, xx J.

January 7 2022

I slipped into a geyser, something warm and kind for me to release into, and the water bonded to my skins, bonded to my organs, to my anatomical heart, to the fibers in my hair and teeth, the water burrowed into my bones and asked me for a little space, it wanted it, it wanted to be held by my cells and my breath and my work, my brain, my world.

Water, dear, you can't cohabitate with me here, I'm already you.

Then make room for me, she answered, laughing her high pitched giggle, and I stopped moving and gave in.

I let go into the laughing face of the water, the bubbles coming up against my neck and tickling me until I too was giggling. Childlike, my first bath.

The container shifted to contain me and the water, the water creating a light capsule around my body, she asked for me to breathe in, I do. Breathe deeply, and track the ways the water tendrils around my nipples, around my toenails, around my eyelashes.

This space, this space has magic, held between the cells, held between the waters, dripping like waterfalls down the cracks in the containers.

Cracks in the containers.

God only fucks with broken vessels because that's how the light can come through.

Bright bubbles surround my face, my mouth, my ears, and fizzle, threatening to expand into my open spaces. I want to blow so it doesn't come out, but water

laughs and nuzzles her way in. We are together now, connected, she flicks a nipple and I release further, relax into her warm hands, she's caressing my body.

I'm caressed.

Oceans contained in a small

Bubbles around my nose and mouth—my first bath.

January 6 2022

Energy dragons birthing stars in the sky, what materials does it take to build a star? What does it feel to have the responsibility of building worlds?

Chest, arm, head, tail movement, wormlike, blowing so hard that my eyes hurt that my chest hurts that my toes hurt there's nothing in these rulebooks about how to get through or out there's no room here for me to expand more there's only ways

to shoot out shoot out and watch the waves of the stars come in faster and faster,
begging for more, feed us they ask, I will if I can I answer, my mouth blowing harder
and the feeling of explosions patter across my skin, rippling.

Do you feel the ripple too?

Who else can feel these birthings? Where is the star doula to hold my hand while
I hold this responsibility?

Stars, like everything else, have to come from somewhere.

What star fertility is this, what kindness fertility is this.

What glitter builds deep in the roaring caverns of energy's tummy, what methods
of birthing doing does each spirit need

Energy dragons, spirits in the ether, combine, world like worm like, together.

Patterns of sway, patterns of stars in the sky.

Tiny and large, glittering bursts of life in the sky

Stars—a life, a life that holds

Gas, materials, what is the environment

What does it feel like to hold the materials for star building inside your tummy?

What does it feel like to hold star construction inside of you?

Build me up with star dust

Build me up with fire

Build me up with golden magic swirling until it curls off of the tips of my ears,
my nose furl while it drips down my chin

Dripping down my chin dripping down my chin

The star dust clings to the dragons nostril, teeth, and jowels, the remnants of the
last star on her lips, she smirks, another one birthed in dust. Another one birthed
in gold glittering hands of the universe, so tactfully and kindly strung up against the
backdrop of a neverending infinity

The kindness of the gods, the spirits, the ancestors swirling around my head and
hands and feet and tails

Long winds stream from me, the fusing methods, the compactedness of this work,
the flow.

January 5, 2022

Woah, the care, of watching someone else's process, of watching their lines, of
watching their winter.

Where rest is not white.

Where rest is not white

Where rest is not white

Where rest is not white

I dance in the waves, I place my feet on the purple ground, they sink through, they

wonder where they're going this isn't like anything on earth, sure its cold but it isn't snow like, it's soft even when it's frozen and it offers...a veil, a blanket, the moment it's immersed.

Taking time to crunch, pat, breathe.

All I want to do is hold and shower in it, flakes stayt flakes and glitter my hair, my shoulders.

I am touch, I am hold. I am dumpling simmering in the soup of winter's rest, enveloping me.

Enveloping my everything, I'm surrounded by quiet, light.

Stroking the rest that's palpable here

Observing the quiet, how does one observe quiet?

We listen.

Dancing with my ears, somatic listening, and listening to the space the body takes up I dip my toe into the purple puddle, melted, candle glowing on the surface.

Is there ice here? I can't feel ice or anything here. I can feel taste here. I can feel sound here and it is quiet.

Quiet feels gliding.

Gliding.

Gliding.

Hammock, above.

Distance but intimate

Apart but intimate

Caked on like nobody knows

Angels are monsters too, no?

Are angels not monsters too?

Are angels not monsters too?

Are angels not monsters too?

I form wings on my back made from packed purple snow, glittering from my shoulder blades where they protrude, stick out, encapsulate, brush, bring.

Gather all and wonder if

Let go of all and wonder why

Can dance be nothing?

Can dance be nothing but observation?

Can a meditation move us?

Resounding chills, reverberating lines, nests of softness and security surround me

I dare not disrupt, but observe the quiet. How do we observe quiet? We listen.

Solidify, the snow changes, it's in a constant state of changing, change, it's the only constant.

Why do we beg for stability in a world that isn't static?

This snow isn't static, snow is cold and frozen water but this snow is...

Reminds me of blood, dripping from a raw nose, no tissue, no sleeve, just a steady drip drool down my lips and chin, not noticing in the dry cold, in the warm cold, in the wet cold, in the light cold, in the dark cold. I am dripping down my face and there's nobody to look at me, nobody to taste the burnt rust coloured taste on my face, no one to lick it up or wipe it away, my eyelashes frozen with purple flakes.

January 4, 2022

The nests on this moon feel like brains, feel like machines that these creatures plug into like a womb, like an umbilical cord, sustaining life, but feathery, but quiet, but foot-driven/fuelled. Feet traffic, steps. Clip-in nests, where you clip in like a telephone off the hook: plug it back on the wall and let it's cord hang below its feet.

Loaded

Unloaded

Swirling though, feet though, trying to touch and not touch, touch through

Gently unwavering gentleness

The ground shards of glass

Like bloodlines, running down fingers, blood touching my lips and tongue, metallic, the golden rim.

I'm alone on this planet? Am I alone? There isn't sound

I didn't want to use my hands, pain, but holding up my legs are another reason, another movement, another invitation.

Willy Wonka cotton candy brain.

Brains folds that have crusted over, frozen solid.

What does the oceans of star-galaxy do for a vision space?

I want a dream space, I want a nonvision space, I want to drown in stargalaxy drowning me. Overflow.

Overflowing with stardust, waves overcome the nests built from shards of glass on the shore, the stars are left stagnant like shells, littering the nests with their magic, leaving small dusty glimpses into the deep ocean floor: stars that fell millions of years ago building coral out of their shiny, glittering deposits on the ocean-like floor of this moon. Fish swim beside small space creatures, meteor ants, crawling through the small fissures in every inkling of this floor, shards of glass poke out of each star asking you to touch: blood pricked, pain? But not pain, the star has a magic for you.

January 3, 2022

Long extensions, reaching out to hold my hands, but their hands are puckered, with small suction cups, and taking their hands is hard—we don't fit together, but that isn't a sign, it isn't an omen, it isn't bad, it means that we can touch one another in different ways, in care-full ways.

Arm heavy but light movements, everything is so light and feathery, but when I grip onto these hands even for a moment I can sense the intense strength, the concentrated wealth of wisdom energy built up in the veins. I wonder about its face, I was only privy to its long, wavering arms, are they its brain? So long, like ropes, but not for holding or climbing or finding.

But for experiencing.

Feeling the flutters.

Soaking up nutrients, spitting them back out.

This monster floats next to me, rooted anchored grounded into the floor, the ocean floor that I cannot see.

Is this just seaweed? Is this a mind of its own?

When algae grows in a water system it means it is clean.

But, wasteland theory, nowhere and nothing no one is not worthy of care and attention and time.

This monster could just float away, this dragon, this water dragon that breathes fire than air, that doesn't yet have a mouth to breathe at all.

What does it mean to be contained? What does it mean to extend beyond containment? What can containers look like that contain, but are expansive?

Can we be both?

Jess Watkin is a Blind artist-scholar studying Disabled artists and care practises in Canada, Disability Dramaturgy, and accessible gatherings. Her book, *Interdependent Magic: Disability Performances in Canada* is the first collection of Disability plays in Canada and is available through Playwrights Canada Press.

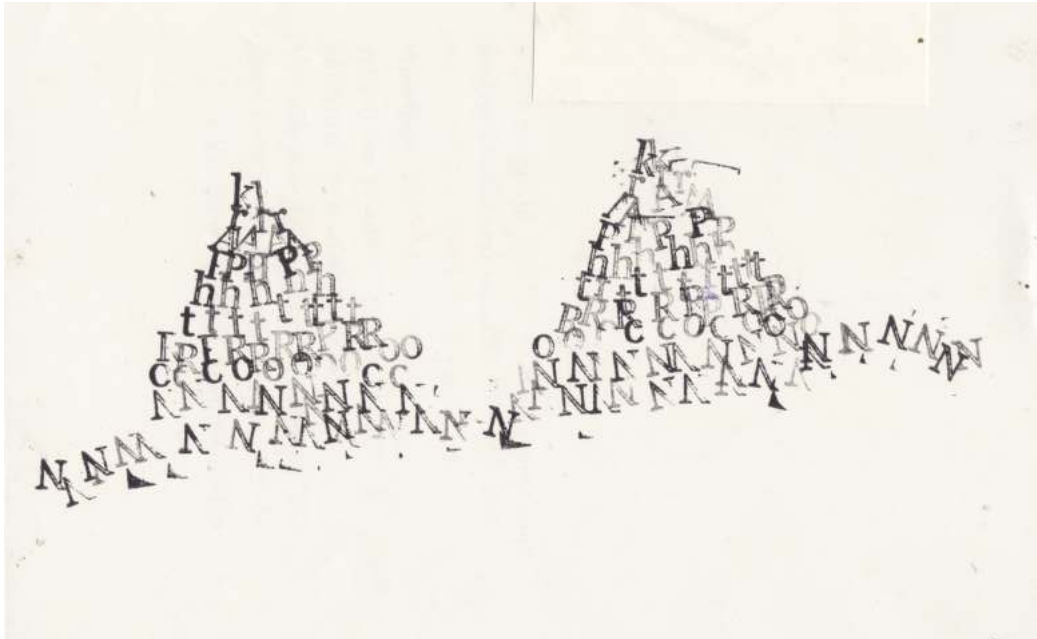
Cartwheels for Nan and Madonna

by Jenn Cole

Impersonation concert, North Bay. Maybe it is 1990. It's our first time Elvis fan hysteria. aaaaaaaaa! Madonna impersonator, legendary cone bra. And this long blonde ponytail striptease. Mom: "We gotta get out of here. This isn't for kids." And afterwards, I did a lot of Madonna dance routines. Arms dramatically descending, turn around and stare the audience right in their faces, self-possessed. And then we would blow bubbles and do cartwheels. And I don't know if that's the thing that started this thing, but my Nan lived in this apartment building in Belleville, and my cousins and I used to get together, and we would do dance routines for the tenants in the building, who were mostly elderly. So we would work on a dance, which usually had some acrobatics, and then we would go into the lobby, and just buzz into every apartment building, and say, "We're doing a dance performance at two, on the west side of the building." And then, all these old ladies would come onto their balconies and watch us. And we would hit 'play,' and dance, and then they'd throw candy down to us. And that felt so great. It was for them, you know? It was a present for them. And that is still how I think of performance. Totally, completely. And I'm still fully willing to be paid in Mentos. *Do it for the love* (Revised from Gatherings First Performances Oral Histories Series, Interviewed by Stephen Johnson)

In this print, I have spelled out my Nan's Belleville apartment street name in the shape of a cone bra. Both these events—witnessing a sexy and mysteriously forbidden strong woman dancing and cartwheeling for elderly fans who were incredibly gracious and taught me to sense that I was, when I was dancing, delightful—have left many impressions on me. Pressing back with materiality of inks, stamps and paper is a way of indexing the reciprocity of living with, being shaped by, and continuing to shape my life and performances out of these memories.

Jenn Cole (mixed ancestry Algonquin Anishinaabe) is Associate Professor of Indigenous Performance and Gender at Trent University and Artistic Director of Nozhem First Peoples Performance Space.



A Bus Tour of Hamilton

by Robert Motum

This is a good place to watch the sun set
This is a good place to take a date
This is a good place to watch the sun set with a date
This is a good place to have a first kiss
This is a good place to have a last kiss
This is a good place to break up with a lover
This is a good place to cry
This is a good place to dance
This is a good place to call your mom
a good place to go on strike
a good place to work
a good place to let employees go
a good place to commute from
a good place to build
to build houses
to build more houses
to be homeless
to gentrify
to pack for the cottage
to pick up after your dog
to smoke
drink
play truth or dare
play badminton
play the violin
to stage a play
to meet somebody
to hide a body
to have a baby
to question reality
to win the lottery
This is a good place to overdose
a good place to live
die
This is a good place to be buried

to decompose
to see a ghost
sleep
wake
sleep walk
a good place to sweat
a good place to fall off your bike
a good place to break your wrist
break your heart
recover
This is a good place to immigrate to
This is a good place to stay
This is a good place to miss your grandparents
to wave at passing traffic
This is a good place to write
to dream
to be
And this, this my passengers, is a good place to end a bus tour
This is a good place.

As a site-specific practitioner and researcher I'm interested in the myriad of stories, memories, and ghosts that collide to create place. Following geographers Tim Cresswell and Doreen Massey, I understand place to be active; to be something created by people doing things; to be performed. This treatment is my attempt, written during the first wave of COVID in Ontario, to capture the multitude of collisions in Hamilton.

Robert Motum is a director, playwright, and PhD candidate at the University of Toronto—where he studies site-specificity and notions of nationhood.

Leotards
by Dr. Christine Mazumdar









A leotard exhibition, lying in the grass. Like fragile hollowed shells rustling in the wind. This is not my uniform. This, our second skin. Moulding to our bodies, forever altered. The material reshapes itself, as it remembers us, as it remembers you. Will you remember me too?

Amidst the leotard collage in the grass, the stories of those who have worn these before me. Passed down from one another, year to year, era to era. Inheriting each others' histories, the ghosts of performances past. If they could talk, oh, the stories they'd tell. Their materiality remembers long after everyone else forgets.

Testimonies in the grass. Like red dresses hanging in the trees. Fluorescent brilliance masks the scars. Waist cinchers conceal the inward strain, making us smaller than we really are. Lingering remnants of collective sweat, hints of decades-old cigarettes. And faded stains, the blood we were never meant to bleed.

Lying in the grass, a leotard graveyard. Remembering what I used to be, revealing who I am. Squeezing into that form one more time, the unforgiving fabric riding up in the back. Will you forgive me?

A leotard display in the grass. The fabrics of this discipline remember my body decades after the fact. And I remember what it feels like to inhabit this form once more. Formless, empty shells of beauty cling together in the wind. Promise you will remember me. This, the last time. Knowing that I might never wear it again.

Dr. Christine Mazumdar is a SSHRC/Sport Canada Postdoctoral Fellow at the department of Art Education at Concordia University where her research project "Touch at a Distance," considers the interrelationship between sport and art, and equitable training practices in aesthetic sport. A former rhythmic gymnast and nationally certified coach, her coaching pedagogy emphasizes consent, agency, and the need to abolish gymnastics' toxic culture of silence. Christine was longlisted for the 2020 CBC Poetry Prize and the 2019 CBC Nonfiction Prize. She holds a PhD from the Centre for Drama, Theatre, and Performance Studies at the University of Toronto.

Photos: Mark Mazumdar

Drawings: Jenn Cole

Unfinished

by Stephen Johnson



This is a painting of me on my way to school
Lunchbox in hand facing away from the road and the bus
Ready but unready
I have turned toward home
I found this in a box of discarded paintings
Left by my mother when
Old and failing and no longer able
She entered long term care
In one final act of artistic expression
So I like to think
She has left me unfinished
But remembered

My mother was an artist, and her artistic practice, in my opinion, saved her life. She was raised an evangelical and ascetic Christian, and was torn between her love for her family and her devotion to her church. We could tell where those struggles took her by her wedding ring. Sometimes it was all right to wear it, and sometimes it was too 'worldly.'

And then, one day, in the late-1950s and in her mid-40s, she began painting in oils. This practice grew, somehow, from her work for Sunday School, painting on felt and creating crafts, though that doesn't explain the transition to the painting of nature, and her family, and the buildings around her.

I was the youngest of her children by far, and what I remember is that she would paint in the farmhouse where she and I spent so many hours together, alone. She painted in a room in the basement, beside the enormous freezer that held the lambs we raised and the beef we bartered. In a room that contained a washing machine with a full ringer on top, endlessly used by her before taking all the laundry out to hang on the line in the back yard. In a room with an oil furnace and little natural light. And an easel and paints.

And a boy of four who had to be kept occupied. My mother created a miniature studio for me as well, with a tiny easel, and a smock, and oils and brushes, to play with as she worked. Though as I remember, mostly I watched.

It is extraordinary to me, thinking back, just how important this 'event' was for this woman. She was alone and lonely and had too much to do. She was discouraged from learning, and taught that all creativity was a sin, and that talent was pride. She had no time for herself for most of her life. But when she did find time, she picked up a brush.

She painted anything and everything—from barns and creeks to my older brother's commedia masks from school. She started to read, and became greatly impressed with Emily Carr's life and journals. She met other women in the community that painted, and started meeting with them weekly in the local one-room schoolhouse to paint together and to trade the secrets of their craft. She would not stop.

'I have no idea who I married,' my father said to me, as he built the frames for her paintings, drove her to art fairs, helped to set up her booth, and labelled her paintings with prices. And in turn, he changed. More colour in his clothing, more reading, more thoughtfulness. More art.

My father passed away at 87, just after finishing his daily regimen of tai-chi. It took him a moment to go. My mother took a different path. She had many small strokes, and increasing dementia, and hid from her family her decline for as long as she could. And all the while, she kept painting, until, finally, she forgot how to hold a brush....

One of the last works she painted, or last that I have in my possession, is a painting of me. It is not taken from a photograph, though there is an 8mm film of this scene, of me going down the long lane in front of our house, toward the road and the school bus. She would not have seen this film for many years, so I take this last work as an imagined scene, a memory.

This is a painting by my mother of her first painting partner, heading out into the world. It is unfinished, uncontrolled. And yet, it captures the event as I felt it. Every morning's trek to school included a silent scream from me, and a sense that the natural world was shifting its form to reflect my panic. All that is in this work. Perhaps she remembered.

Art is always with us, never leaves us.

Stephen Johnson is Principal Investigator for the Gatherings Project. He studied and taught theatre and performance studies at universities in Guelph, Hamilton, Toronto and New York City. He grew up on a sheep farm in Lowville, Ontario.

Immigration: a love story

by Sarah Robbins

Doreen was asked by her boyfriend Jeff if he could borrow money to take a ship from England to Canada. She could join him afterward. *I might never see him again...*

My grandmother and I were watching the film *Brooklyn* together one night in her Florida condo. The scene saw the protagonist on a ship from Ireland to New York in the 1950s. “That was my life,” she told me.



Empress of France, painting

Doreen and Jeff never spoke about the war. Only watching this film did I get a sense of their crossing. Only after their passing did I learn of the fate of Coventry, their adolescence there, and the conditions that brought them to start a new life in Toronto. This painting depicts the vessel that brought my grandparents across the Atlantic. Taped on the back, their immigration cards. It hung beside the door to their garage in their Oakville home, and now hangs beside the front door of my Toronto apartment, in the same High Park neighbourhood where they boarded upon first arriving in Canada.

A few weeks after my visit with my grandmother in Florida, she would unexpectedly die of pneumonia. Jeff had passed five years before. Our chat about Brooklyn was one of my last conversations with her. The print reminds me of my grandparents' risks, their hopes, and Doreen's story of following love across the ocean.



Canadian Immigration Identification Cards, 1954

Sarah Robbins is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the University of Toronto, working as Project Manager for the Gatherings Partnership. She recently completed her PhD at the UofT's Centre for Drama, Theatre and performance Studies. She has an interest in acting training practices, and employs intersectional feminist theory both as research methodology and teaching pedagogy, with a focus on equity and inclusivity in spaces of performance training. Her work has been published in *alt. theatre* magazine and *HowlRound Theatre Commons*.

Gatherings Manifesto

1. Gatherings is a forum for theatre and performance scholars to explore creative work that is inspired by their work as scholars, and not aside from that work. We seek to encourage a space where the scholar and the artist in each of us can meet to advantage. This is not to say that no such spaces exist – but not enough, and not of this kind.
2. Gatherings is a place for those who are steeped in scholarship to employ modes of working not ordinarily circulated in scholarly publishing: performative texts; poems of all kinds; short-form prose; performance traces; figurative marginalia; the visual manipulation of words; scripts; scores; diagrams and other manifestations of the mind; visual interpretations and manipulations of the work of the scholar; and many other modes of expression. We know that the work of the scholar often travels through many of these forms of expression toward the rigours of the scholarly publication. These transitory ways of confronting the scholarship and the archive are worth examining.
3. Gatherings is a print publication, chosen with the belief that, while the web is a wonderful thing, there is something tactile in the work of the scholar. We emphasize materiality and materials, and the sense of touch, and advocate the use of paper, pen, printing presses, paints, graphite, ink, and wax, of words and figures, of found objects, decay and traces, of documents manipulated and visual experiments as documents. All techniques are welcome. We believe in the materiality of the held literary and artistic object.
4. Gatherings occurs at a moment when Theatre and Performance Scholars are often also practitioners. This publication is a space for materials that reflect these endeavours. It is also a space for the secret, amateur, nocturnal, marginal, desperate scrawlings of the artist-in-us-all.
5. Gatherings recognizes that by exploring alternative ways of working, the academic employing artful methodologies and sharing their processes/productions might become a happier academic. Likewise, the academic who holds a volume of their community's creative work is likely to become happy too.
6. Gatherings is a space to highlight the scholars working in our particular environment, which extends beyond universities to other institutions, locales, moments in time, and individuals' pursuit of the history of performance related to their own lives.

With grateful thanks from the Editors to our Advisory Board:

Natalie Alvarez, Allana Lindgren, Marlis Schweitzer, Jenn Stephenson

This chapbook series is a part of the Gatherings Partnership

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