SPARK SERIES 2018
ARTIST PROFILES

Live art
Contemporary dance
Transdisciplinary performance
By 303-associated artists

May 26th – June 3rd 2018, Montréal
Welcome to Montréal!

Dear peers,

This year’s SPARK Series presents five studio showings, as well as a networking event for artists, and a public discussion around Visibility/Invisibility.

New this year: we are showing full pieces instead of excerpts as the works have all enjoyed recent premieres, and are tour-ready. That said, for the most part the context remains informal, and some technical magic will have to be left to the imagination!

We open the series May 26th with a late-night co-presentation of Andrew Tay’s recent trio Fame Prayer/EATING, at the MAI. Developed in residency at Studio 303 in 2016, this collaboratively-created work is gorgeous, uber-queer, unsettling and hilarious. It has since been seen at Summerworks (Toronto), Fierce (Birmingham) and last month at La Chapelle.

The following week, we present afternoon showings of recently-premiered works: Kimberley de Jong shares her first solo, Boxher, an animalistic exploration referencing climate change, whereas Ellen Furey and UK-based choreographer Malik Nashad Sharpe offer SOFTLAMP.autonomies, which I experienced as a generous and relentless ode to resilience and survival. Each of these projects was developed at Studio 303 in 2017.

Next, Clara Furey presents her first group piece, Cosmic Love, featuring an outstanding cast of dance makers, and we end the series with Aisha Sasha John’s remarkable poetry and movement mash-up, the aisha of is, [which premiered a year ago as the aisha of oz at the Whitney in NYC].

This series provides a snapshot of contemporary performance in Montreal, by an innovative and collaborative new generation of artists who embody their politics. Collectively, these works speak of resistance, thriving, and togetherness. Each of these young makers has a singular artistic practice, deserving of your attention.

Enjoy the ride!

Miriam Ginestier
on behalf of the Studio 303 team and all our associated artists
SPARK Series curator and co-director of Studio 303

PS - As of May 2018, Studio 303 is now co-directed by myself and long-time colleague Kim-Sanh Châu. This move supports 303’s evolving needs while facilitating a more horizontal work environment. Kim-Sanh is also a choreographer and you can see her recent work, Kaleidoscope, a minimalist psychedelic experience in a shared showing with former artist-in-residence Hanna Sybille Müller at Studio 303, June 2nd at 5:30pm [right after Andrew Tay’s Make Banana Cry at UQÀM!].
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<td>ANDREW TAY</td>
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Studio Showings  Networking Events
Andrew Tay is a hybrid form of performer, choreographer and dance curator based in Montreal. In 2005, he co-founded (with collaborator Sasha Kleinplatz) the company Wants&Needs danse. Since then, the company has produced the wildly popular dance events Piss in the Pool and Short&Sweet which take place in non-traditional performance venues throughout the city. Residencies have included Studio 303, Usine C (Montreal), and K3 (Hamburg). In 2012 he was awarded the DanceWEB Scholarship (Impulstanz, Vienna) and was nominated for a Quebec Notables award in the Arts&Culture category. He is currently the artistic curator of the O Vertigo Centre for Creation. Andrew actively thinks about community, irreverence and resistance in both his performance and curatorial practice.

François Lalumière lives and works in Montreal and creates collages, tableaux, installations, sculptures, and urban interventions, recognizable by the use of duct tape as artistic tool, brush and paint.

Katrzyna Szugajew is a visual artist and performer from Poland, who works with performers, for performers and as a performer and is primarily interested in the nude body, its abilities and potentialities.

Press

We need more of these kinds of performances as we aim to move away from stereotypes to create art that embodies the complexity of defining and claiming identity in a multicultural contemporary western society. - Helen Simard, The Dance Current, 2017

Tay and Lalumière’s performance contributes to the production of a new, challenging logic of symbolic association. By explicitly denying the viewer the opportunity to situate the performance within a stable model of representational communication, the viewer is forced to contend with the work immediately, starting from an affective, pre-discursive level. - Isaac Flaag, The Work of Art in the Age of Social Production: Toronto, 2014
Work

Fame Prayer/EATING – 60 mins
Fame Prayer/EATING is a performance project created by Andrew Tay (dance/performance), François Lalumière (visual art) and Katrzyna Szugajew (photographer/sculptor). It is built on Andrew Tay’s recent works Summoning Aesthetics and Monsters, Angels and Aliens are not a Substitute for Spirituality which examined spirituality and magic through queer aesthetics and approaches. In Fame Prayer/EATING they are seeking to examine and confuse ideas of pop culture and spirituality through the process of consumption. They will look at pop culture “spiritual texts” and other self help ideologies as potential material for body work/creation of objects and performance. They see this work as a counter point to the neo-liberal notion of self care, which keep telling us we should be fixing the things that are wrong with us. Created with the support of Studio 303, Fame Prayer/EATING was awarded the Vanguard Award for Risk and Innovation from the Summerworks Performance Festival in Toronto Aug 2016, and had a critically-acclaimed Montreal première at Theatre La Chapelle in April 2018.

Make Banana Cry – 90 mins
Make Banana Cry is a critical and destabilizing dance performance co-signed by Andrew Tay and Stephen Thompson. The work questions Asian stereotypes while examining the transmission of cultural identity. A diverse cast of Canadian artists approach the issue by exploring Western myths concerning the “Asian Fantasy”, eventually moving forward to propose other ways of “being together.” As aesthetic embodiments of “Asian-ness” become more predominant in Western art and pop culture, the artists share a desire to reflect these representations and explode the mechanisms that create these categorizations within today’s appropriative landscape. Make Banana Cry is a continuous barrage of identity politics, a durational parade which contemplates the problematic of universal “Western” pop culture, while drawing on the artistic background of the invited artists – Dana Michel, Ellen Furey, Simon Portigal, Hanako Hoshimi-Caines, and visual artist Dominique Pétrin.

Other offerings
DJ for dance events/festivals, curator (Short&Sweet), artist talk
Kimberley de Jong is interested in the potential of the body; its capacity to hold and sustain presence and generate movement and sound from a deep and visceral place. She draws on themes such as climate change, human empathy and love as source material to create. Her collaboration with sound artist Jason Sharp led her to create Boxher, her first solo choreography. Boxher was presented in March 2018 at Tangente Danse, (Montreal). Previous works include Unravelling, a duo collaboration with Brianna Lombardo created during a CCOV residency and CYCLE2, presented by Tangente Danse in 2014. Kimberley was born in Australia and grew up in British Columbia. She has been performing professionally for 15 years starting in the Netherlands with Itzik Galili, and has danced for Montreal choreographers Marie Chouinard, Frédérick Gravel, Dana Gingras, Alan Lake, Martin Messier, Caroline Laurin Beaucage, and with live band GY!BE. Kimberley is also a mom of two girls and is a birth and postpartum doula.

Press

The dancer’s presence is rebellious, while a mysterious, unarticulated speech, captured directly in her throat, is chanted. With her visceral movements, the harsh lights and the saturated, occasionally jarring sound track, Boxher exposes a raw materiality, which comes to a close with the fainting of the creature in its soiled habitat. Resilient, her heart continues to beat all the same.
- Melanie Carpentier, Le Devoir, March 2018

An artwork that struck me with a pertinent message for thirty minutes, rich with gestures and their resonances. And that made me think about my habits and lifestyle and what these leave behind.
- Robert St-Amour, critic, March 2018

I particularly appreciated Kimberley De Jong’s presentation, which was excellent from beginning to end and showed a perfect mastery of the subject. At a certain point during the show, she offered her solo and I couldn’t take my eyes off of her body language thanks to her intensity and accuracy.
- Cindy Dormoy, Blog YULorama, January 26 2017 (Corps Morts de Martin Messier)
Boxher is a collaboration between performer Kimberley de Jong and sound artist Jason Sharp. Throughout the progression of the 35-minute performance, we witness the adaptation of a sensory driven creature roaming a minimalist landscape, alone save for human waste. This beast eventually transforms into a predator driven by greed to capture. She defines the limits of the space she is in. Kimberley’s heart and throat are miked to Jason’s modulator synthesiser creating a visceral crescendo, a sense of urgency, and need for action.

Boxher was presented in March 2018 at Tangente Danse (Montreal), with the help of studio 303’s technical residency. It will be presented during the Suoni Per Il Popolo festival on June 12th 2018 at La Sala Rossa (Montreal).
Marikiscrycrycry (Malik Nashad Sharpe) and Ellen Furey have been collaborating across continents since 2016 in creation for their co-authored work, SOFTLAMP:autonomies. Together they are interested in aestheticizing pluralistic desires and realities through decidedly abstract and highly physical choreographic structures.

Malik Nashad Sharpe is a Vincentian-American choreographer based in London, UK. They consider choreography a tool to suggest ulterior and subversive critiques of an otherwise phobic and unaccommodating world. Their performances emphasise the necessity to proliferate pro-Queer and pro-Black aesthetics under neoliberal hegemonies. They offer workshops around the world, including at the famous Goldsmith University and have performed their work in venues across the UK, USA, and Canada.

Ellen Furey is a choreographer and performer based in Montreal. Often engaged in collaborative and discursive processes, her work repurposes ideas/potentials of virtuosity and showmanship as grounds for abstract bodily expression, non-linear rebellion, and debate. Her work has been shown in the UK, USA, and Canada.

**Press**

This collaboration gives rise to a striking work in which the two choreographers immerse themselves as interpreters with dedication and brilliance. - D'danse, May 2018

The public was standing, too, to salute Ellen Furey and Malik Nashad Sharpe.
- Larianne Azel, www.choq.ca, April 25, 2018

... a fertile ground of emotions for the spectator.
- Robert St-Amour, April 24, 2018
Work

SOFTLAMP.autonomies – 60 mins
SOFTLAMP.autonomies is a dance work built from the desire to trouble notions of nationalism and its many affects on our bodies. Insistent and intricate, it proposes an immersive and highly physical choreographic map. Two bodies side-by-side looking for an autonomy without coercion. Difference without separability. It premiered April 23 2018 at Theatre La Chapelle [Montreal].

$ELFIES$ – 30 mins
$ELFIES$ is the third work in a series built around the ontology of Blackness and Queerness at the intersection of allostatic load (the wear and tear of the body due to repeated stress), relentless American gun violence, and the authoritarian hegemonies of today. The highly physical and illusory work is a duet between Malik Nashad Sharpe and Kam Wan, set to a soundtrack of cloud rap and trap music, and with large scale props including a pink whale that is 2m in length, 30 replica guns spray painted pink, an anime-sculpture lightning bolt, and more.
After studying music at the Conservatoire de Paris, then dance at the École de danse contemporaine de Montréal, Clara Furey developed an interest in mixed forms, in the languages and codes that make up the performing arts. She began her artistic career as a singer and composer before turning to dance, acting and cinema. After dancing for numerous choreographers, including George Stamos and Benoît Lachambre, in 2003 Clara decided to focus on choreographic creation and performance art, conceiving dance in terms of the body’s full range of movements, breaths, work, and action. Over the last few years, Clara has been developing a process to materialize abstract emotions. As well, she has been developing works that are based on the hyper-awakening of sense perception.

Press
Cosmic Love juggles between visual art, music, dance and performance, mixing these disciplines to create a rich and fascinating piece, flush with the sensations of the performers and of our own.
- Charles Brécard, DF Danse, December 2017
Furey leads us to discover unknown paths and energies of our senses, an interconnexion between everything that exists and that we cannot perceive. (...) An abstract work that hypnotizes, that speaks of listening and empathy.
- Ariana Pirela Sanchez, Nevros’Arts, December 2017
Cosmic Love is the “craziest” mandate Furey has accepted in her career. The piece serves as a vehicle for the artist to share her innermost beliefs. In a “quasi spiritual” perspective, the piece is an ode to the energy that is present in emptiness, to what exists beyond sight, towards the idea that “we are all interconnected.”
- Alessandra Rigano, Voir, December 2017
CLARA FUREY

Work

*Cosmic Love* – 70 mins

*Cosmic Love* is Clara Furey’s first group work as Artistic Director. The creative process for this piece revolves around intuitive and poetic representations of physical phenomena.

In a stripped-down performance space where all forms of communication become possible, she works with her performers on the ongoing transformation of energy and ritualized movement. Clara offers a kinesiology dance, a dance about matter and the absence of matter. She brings together performers and showgoers in the weightlessness of the senses. By questioning the vacuum of space along with every link and dynamic that it is filled with, she creates a choreographic work of abstraction, which reveals a unique glow of bodies. The space vibrates as the seven performers move and pave the way for a participation-driven world, infused with synchronicity, where different forms of energy are shared.

Considering art as a means of linking different entities around a spirituality that is free from dogmas, with this work the choreographer sets out to create links between mediums, beings and senses.

Other offerings

Workshops

Francis Ducharme (photography), Mathieu Verrault (design)
Aisha Sasha John’s work is singular in being experienced as simultaneously original and ancient. Guided by the forensic authority of the heart, through the fields of performance and poetry John articulates a practice of reception and rhythm. John is also the author of three poetry collections: *The Shining Material* (Book*hug 2011), *THOU* (Book*hug 2014) as well as the 2018 Griffin Poetry Prize shortlisted *I have to live* (Mclelland & Stewart 2017). Aisha’s training in various Congolese, Ethiopian and Caribbean dances as well as contemporary western improvisation techniques lend her solo performance work an inimitable physicality. From 2015 to 2017, Aisha choreographed, performed and curated as a member of the performance collective WIVES whose performance *Feeled* earned the collective the 2016 Offta Festival Audacity Prize. Aisha has an MFA in Creative Writing from the University of Guelph, and a B.A. in African Studies and Semiotics from the University of Toronto. She was born in Montreal.

**Press**

Earlier this month, I was lucky to catch John’s *the aisha of oz* at the Whitney Museum, and I’m almost ashamed to say it was truly sublime. Over nearly an hour, John combined soliloquy, dance, music, performance, excerpts of *I have to live* and what I want to call “Skype-voguing” to dramatize the dissonant experience of mundane life under the shadow of institutionalized racial violence. Then, in its final moments, what had seemed to be the back wall of the performance space began to rise. As John danced and chanted “forever she may live,” the curtain revealed floor-to-ceiling windows overlooking the Hudson River and the sticks of the Chelsea Piers. It was sunset – the performance timed perfectly – and as the sun swallowed the grey space, John became an astonishing silhouette. A radiant figure within the washed-out interior of the museum, reminding us of the many unexpected ways to be seen.

- David B. Hobbs, the Globe and Mail, June 2017
Work

_the aisha of is_ – 70 mins

_the aisha of is_ had its Canadian premiere at Montreal, Arts Interculturels (MAI) on April 27 and 28, 2018. The work originally premiered as “the aisha of oz” at the Whitney Museum in New York as a work-in-progress on June 1, 2017. It was curated as part of the Whitney Independent Study Program Curatorial exhibition _That I am reading backwards and into for a purpose, to go on_. Aisha Sasha John is a wizard of reception—and in _the aisha of is_ performs a necessary alchemy. Here, the movement principle is the authority of the heart—and sensitivity is revealed as power. Here, ecstatic music activates the indelible wound of Black life in a white supremacy. Here, rage is harnessed as fire and transmuted into light. Here, light pours out and into eyes.

Other offerings

Poetry reading from Griffin Prize shortlisted book, _I have to live_.

Yuula Benivolski
Thank you to RBC Emerging Artists Project for their support