



MARIE  
LAMBIN GAGNON

[www.marielambingagnon.net](http://www.marielambingagnon.net)

PRESS KIT

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## BIOGRAPHY

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Originally from Montreal, Marie graduated from the School of Toronto Dance Theatre (Toronto) as well as Ballet Divertimento (Montreal). In parallel to her dance training she earned a college degree in Fine Arts at Cegep du Vieux Montréal. Marie Lambin-Gagnon shared her work nationally in Montreal, Toronto and Moncton, and internationally in Germany, Mexico, Iceland and Austria, amongst others. In 2018, the choreographer collaborated with visual artist Sara Cwynar on her film “Red Film”. The film premiered at Sao Paulo Biennial, and was later screened as part of Hyundai Card Video Views, MoMA’s acclaimed collection of video art.

In 2019, she was commissioned by the Toronto Dance Theatre to create a sculptural performance installation titled “Slow Dance,” which earned a feature in NOW Magazine as one of their “12 Stage Artists to watch in 2019.” The piece was nominated for a Dora Mavor Moore Award for “Outstanding Performance of an Ensemble.” “Slow Death,” an installation and performance commissioned by the Art Gallery of Ontario and was shown in situ in the institution’s European Masters galleries. The work was also part of the Furies Festival in August 2022. Marie Lambin-Gagnon has several commissions by renowned organizations such as The Bentway, Common Ground Festival and The Love-In. Her project Still Life will premiere in Toronto, co-presented by dance made in Canada; fait au Canada and The Citadel.



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## ARTISTIC STATEMENT

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The artist’s works blur the boundaries between these mediums by offering experiences that are sensual and sensorial for the performers and visitors who experience them. Marie disrupts the everyday order, altering the rhythms of the body and its relationships with and within its environment using props, costumes and structural creations that use vibrant colors, textures and spatial designs. Through feminine universes, she reimagines the relationship between bodies and objects by questioning power dynamics and the way in which they are respectively experienced and consumed.

# SLOW DEATH

2020

Length: 40min

*Slow Death* is an installation performance engaging with the idea of death as perpetual transformation. The performance is a deliberate slow-moving choreography that brings the public on a visual and emotional journey, creating in the process a constant moving image that dies and rebirths in front of the viewers' eyes.

The piece develops a relational approach to choreography in which dancers and objects animates one another equally. At times, they appear as extensions of one another; at other moments their singularities are heightened. The work extends choreography beyond the human body as an investigative inquiry into the movement of objects normally considered "inanimate."

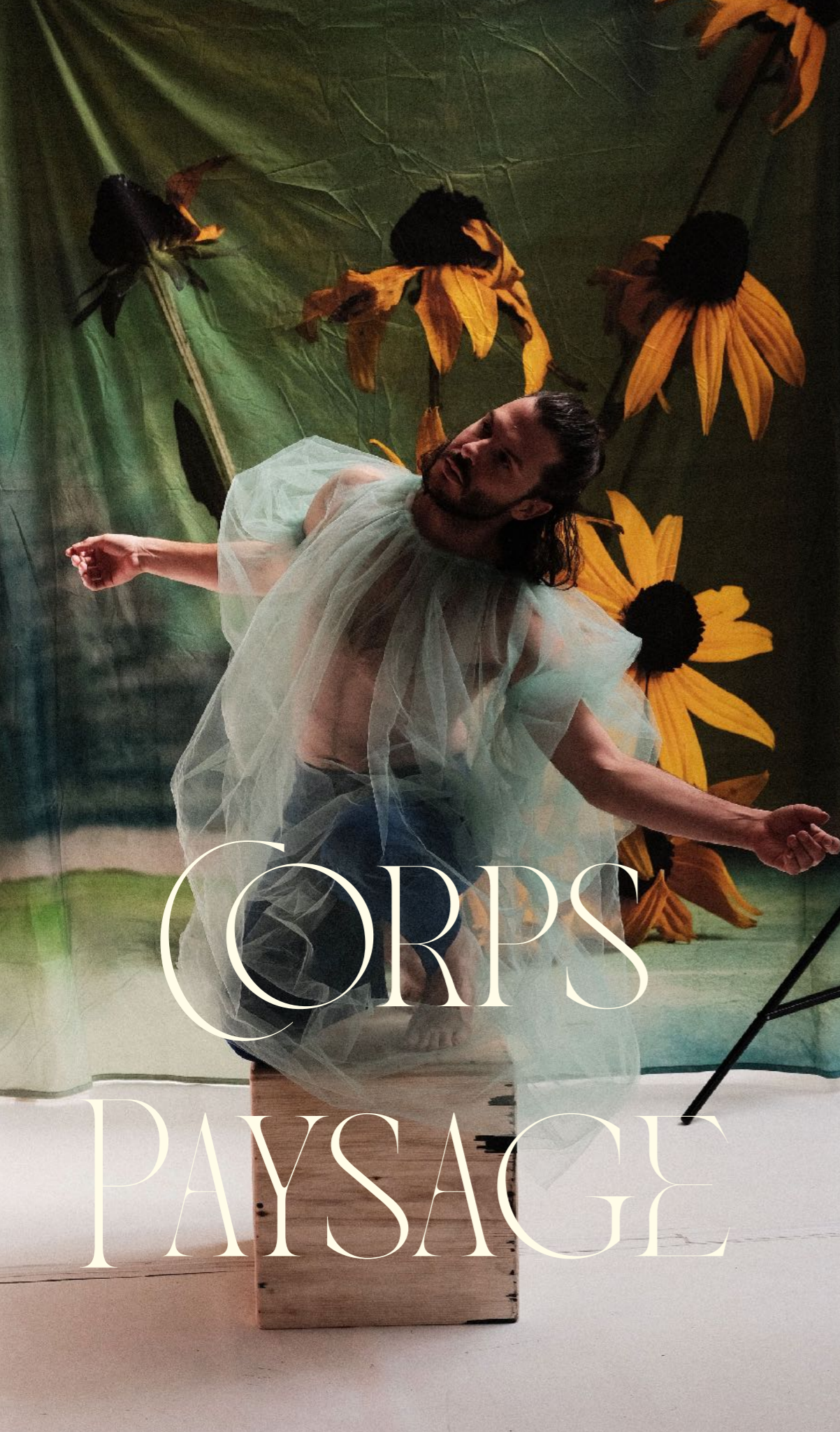
Originally commissioned by the Art Gallery of Ontario, the work was created in response to European Masters galleries. In addition the work was presented in 2022 as part of Furies Festival in Quebec.

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**Link to solo performance:**

<https://vimeo.com/774039446/cbc666c375?share=copy>





# CORPS PAYSAGE

2022

Length: 45min

"Corps/Paysage" is an exploration of the interplay between the human form and its surrounding milieu. Drawing inspiration from the classical artistry of landscape paintings, this piece reimagines traditional compositional elements, infusing them with contemporary perspectives and the ethereal beauty of nature. Through deliberate slow movements, the dancers craft a mesmerizing tableau, inviting viewers into a realm of introspection and reverie.

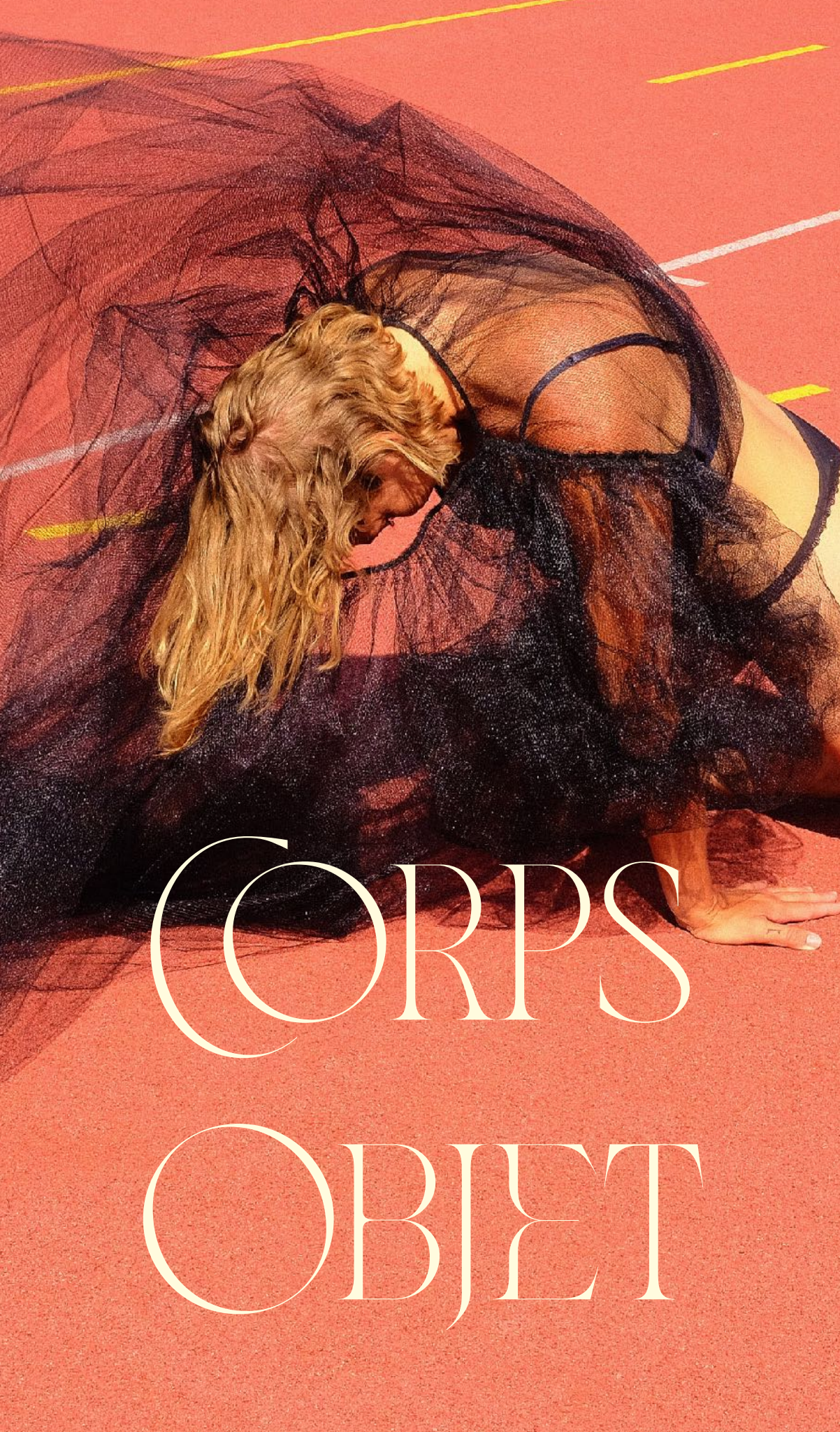
Within this immersive experience, expansive backdrops adorned with oversized blossoms provide a striking scenery for three dancers adorned in flowing tulle attire. A carefully curated soundscape, featuring the melodies of birdsong and rainfall, deepens the illusion, blurring the boundaries between reality and imagination. Whether staged within the confines of a gallery or amidst the open expanse of a park, this piece demands a deliberate slowing of pace, compelling spectators to fully engage with the present moment and reflect upon their relationship with time.

As the dancers gracefully traverse the space, they embody a contemplative dialogue between internal and external landscapes, allowing the environment to shape their movements. Versatile in its presentation, "Corps/Paysage" adapts to diverse settings, seamlessly merging with each unique backdrop it encounters.

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**Link to performance:**

<https://vimeo.com/777170375/bc19e4a095?share=copy>



# CORPS OBJET

2023

Length: 3hours

"Corps/Objet" boldly confronts the notion of the female body as both objectified and empowering within the realm of dance. This exploration delves into the intricate interplay between the emotional and physical states of performers and their audience, often revealing disparities that challenge conventional perceptions.

Through a nuanced choreographic language, the piece employs techniques such as eye gazing, breathing matching, and deliberate use of space and stillness to manipulate the power dynamics between performers and spectators. Serving as a guide, the choreographer's voice punctuates the performance, marking the passage of time and guiding the journey for both dancers and viewers alike.

In silence, dancers traverse a spectrum of states—empowered, abandoned, submissive, and abstract—repeated in a cyclical rhythm that emphasizes a sense of continuity and autonomy. Within this framework, the choreography is punctuated by the raw, visceral sounds of corporeal existence: the whisper of skin against floor, the percussion of heels upon ground, the gentle cadence of flesh meeting flesh. These auditory motifs serve as poignant reminders of the material nature of the body.

The dancers' bodies are adorned with sculptural costumes, strategically revealing and concealing various aspects, challenging perceptions and prompting introspection. Through this interplay of visibility and concealment, "Corps/Objet" invites audiences to question and abstract their understanding of the human form, ultimately challenging societal norms and expectations.

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**Link to performance (work-in-progress):**

<https://vimeo.com/853553435/9fb64a08d5?share=copy>

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## SLOW DEATH (BY MARIE LAMBIN-GAGNON AT THE AGO)

🕒 MARCH 9, 2020 🧑‍🎨 MIRETTE SHOEIR



### Installation is full of “joyous chaos” but invites thoughtful consideration

[Slow Death](#) is a visually stunning dance installation that took place at the [Art Gallery of Ontario](#) (AGO) on March 4 & 6. The performance is a joyful movement (I would say romp, but romp implies fast movement which this piece was not) surrounded by shimmery, brightly colored fabrics and paper.

[Slow Death](#), choreographed by [Marie Lambin-Gagnon](#), is performed in two galleries featuring predominately religious artwork ranging from the medieval age to the 16th century. David Norsworthy performed a solo in one gallery, while Emily Law and Kathia Wittenborn performed as a duo in the gallery across the hall.

The performances were about 45 minutes long and were performed again, so the audience could experience both pieces. Some audience members kept flitting back and forth between both galleries, trying to decide which performance they wanted to commit to.

At this point I should say that I know next to nothing about contemporary dance (actually scratch out the ‘next to’). I can only speak as a laywoman and a civilian that I really enjoyed this installation! It was a feast for the eyes. It started off with the dancers being draped in all sorts of extravagant fabrics that were neon pink, shimmery gold, bright blues, orange tulle; some were feathered, and there were extravagant dried flower bouquets. I just want to give props to Mairi Greig for her outstanding costume designs.

Both pieces featured slow-paced movements through which the dancers freed themselves bit by bit from the layers of fabric that they were covered in. They were constantly swimming in these colorful fabrics and the performances ended with them buried underneath them. If I could describe it in a phrase I would say it was joyous chaos.

The dancers were also beautifully framed against austere religious iconography, and sometimes seemed to be mirroring it in an exuberantly colored tableau.

I must admit that I’m no good at interpreting what contemporary dance means (and I’m sure it’s different for each of us) but in an [interview](#) Lambin-Gagnon said that it’s a celebration of transitions: you enjoy each moment while grieving the fact that you cannot hold on to it.

She connected the idea to the concept of [Slow Art Day](#), which basically invites museum patrons to visit a piece of art and spend longer with it, just really seeing it. The slow movement of this piece was echoing the ethos of just spending a longer time observing something and allowing yourself to be affected by its uniqueness and poetry.

If this installation comes back, go see it!

*Photo courtesy of Marie Lambin-Gagnon*

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## Slow Dance and This Shape, We Are In Toronto Dance Theatre

January 28, 2019 Rebecca Felgate Arts, Performing Arts



The Performing Arts are good for the soul and brilliant for the mind. I often forget this in the dead of winter when the weather stops me wanting to trudge out in the snow, even if it is for something fun and cultural. However, I was reminded of this once again as I visited the home of Toronto Dance Theatre for a double bill of movement.



First up I sat for Marie Lambin Gagnon's instillation piece, *Slow Dance*, which apparently was utilizing the studio space downstairs for the first time since the 1980s. Interesting that that should be the case as the opening tableau of the piece had a distinctly 80s punk-fashion show vibes. Think David Bowie and runway model's high on cocaine. Coupled with the pumping sound design, it was all very HIGH FASHUN, etc. And then it began.

I can get lost in movement pieces like this. Before my very eyes, an exclusive runway show melted and dissolved, bent and stretched to become a junkyard replete with a homeless man swaddled in layers. He in turn became Gandalf worshipping the wizardry of the household appliance. I spoke to my friend after and she was getting strong hermit crab vibes. Ah, interpretive movement, I love you so.

The key theme seemed to be consumerism. From the hermit crab constantly changing and discarding shells to the fashion show descending into scrapes of waste clothing, from glistening household appliances to their final resting place in landfill, the ultimate story seemed to be about "things" and humans relationship to them perhaps getting in the way of their relationship to one another. Whatever the intended message, Peter Kelly, Devon Snell, Yuichiro Inoue and Margarita Soria master their movements; slow and steady with aching control and intent. A wonder to watch on all fronts.

Next up we had *This Shape, We Are In*; a stark visual contrast to *Slow Dance* in its vast space and few objects. Jeanine Dunning's piece seemed more to be about the calamity and chaos that comes along with being human and our need to connect. Can we connect across tables? Can we connect through shut doors? Does standing or sitting matter? Why do we have to walk and talk and behave in certain perfunctory ways when actually we just sort of want to cry and scream on the floor sometimes? Well, *The Shape We Are In* presents the banality and confusion of human existence with the expert help of performers Valerie Calam, Alana Elmer, Mairi Greig, Megumi Kokuba, Pulga Muchochoma, Erin Poole and Roberto Soria. Together the ensemble created expert moments of physical comedy, tension and drama. I was left deeply considering my own relationship to action and impulse.

While you absolutely could see *Slow Dance* and *This Shape, We Are In* as individual pieces, I think together they pose really interesting questions as to human needs. Do we need things more than we need connections, or do we buy things to allow us to feel connected?

Both shows run until February 2<sup>nd</sup> at the Winchester Theatre. For more information on Toronto Dance Theatre or to book tickets, visit the Toronto Dance Theatre [website](#).

# PRESS

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## 12 stage artists to watch in the first half of 2019

From a pop music legend and two Olivier Award-winning Canadians to one of the country's most eclectic artists performing behind bars, here are a bunch of folks serving up big drama in the new year

BY GLENN SUMI, KATHLEEN SMITH, STEVE FISHER

DECEMBER 29, 2018 2:50 PM

[https://www.now.com/artist/12-stage-artists-to-watch-in-the-first-half-of-2019-1979-1001602](#)

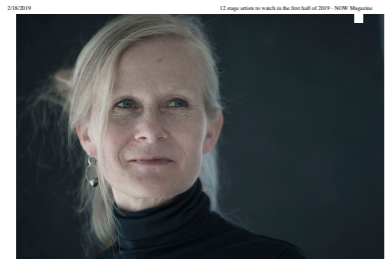


**PHILIP RICCIO**

**What:** Actor in 1979, Michael Healey's comedy about Joe Clark, who was Canada's 16th prime minister for a brief eight months in 1979, January 9 to 27 at the Berkeley Street Theatre ([canadianstage.com](#)).

**Why:** In his carefully chosen stage roles (among them *John, Jerusalem* and *Mr. Marmalade*), Riccio always brings an intelligence and a watchful intensity to his work. Count on the same with his Betty Mitchell Award-nominated performance in Healey's second political play (after 2012's *Proud*, about Stephen Harper), set at a time when politicians were interested in appealing to every voter and not just their base. And yes, Riccio will be wearing Clark's signature brown corduroy jacket.

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**KITT JOHNSON**


**What:** The iconic Danish choreographer performs her solo, *Post No Bills*, February 8 and 9 at Harbourfront Centre Theatre ([harbourfrontcentre.com](#)).

**Why:** A minimalist sensibility and existential themes are hallmarks of Johnson - who, pushing 60, is still a powerhouse performer. Great that Toronto finally gets to see this show, which has been touring the world for that past four years. The work explores ideas around crisis, both personal and societal. And, in a new initiative for the Torque series, Johnson's debut will include a master class for the community called *The Sustainable Body* on February 6.

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Tags: [Crystal Pite](#), [Bahia Watson](#), [Marie Lambin-Gagnon](#), [Philip Riccio](#), [Augusto Bitter](#), [Kawa Ada](#), [Jonathan Young](#), [Sting](#), [Franco Nguyen](#), [Kitt Johnson](#), [Amaka Umeb](#), [Hailey Gillis](#), [stage](#), [culture](#), [this week in NOW](#)

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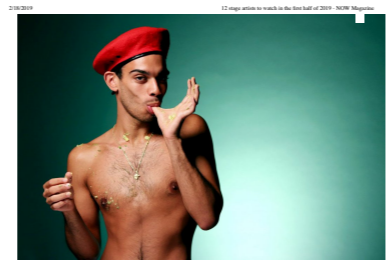


**STING**

**What:** Writer/actor in *The Last Ship*, a musical set in 1960s England, February 9 to March 24 at Princess of Wales ([melvish.com](#)).

**Why:** The solo rocker, composer and former lead singer of the Police is also an accomplished actor, and he's ready to show off all of the above - plus his progressive politics - in this deeply personal project about shipyard workers trying to survive the Margaret Thatcher era. The show didn't fare well on Broadway, but it's since been reworked and is coming here fresh from the UK, including a sold-out run in Sting's birthplace of Newcastle, where it probably should have debuted in the first place.

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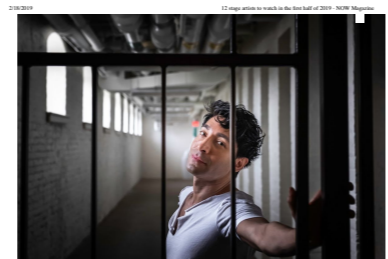


**AUGUSTO BITTER**

**What:** Writer/actor in *CHICHO*, his solo show about a queer man's coming of age in Venezuela and Canada (March 7 to 24 at Theatre Passe Muraille Backspace, [passemuraille.ca](#)); actor in *Iphigénie And The Furies*, Jeff Ho's new adaptation of a Greek classic (January 6 to 20 at the Daniels Spectrum Aki Studio, 416-531-1402).

**Why:** The talented young Bitter has an unpredictable spark about him, which he's shown in plays like *The Monument* and *Rope Burning Out*. That spark should produce a rich flame in *CHICHO*'s personal story about sexual orientation, Catholicism and the diasporic experience. Before that, Bitter and co-stars Thomas Olajide, Virgilia Griffith and PJ Prudat are set to add heat to Ho's genre-bending take on the ancient myth about vengeance.

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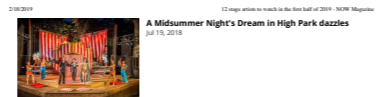


**KAWA ADA**

**What:** Actor in *Kiss Of The Spider Woman*, the inaugural production of Eclipse Theatre Company, March 6 to 10, performed in the historic Don Jail ([eclipse-theatre.ca](#)).

**Why:** One of the most versatile artists in the country, the Afghan-Canadian actor hasn't, to our knowledge, been cast in a Toronto musical (even though one of his first professional gigs was Broadway musical *Bombay Dreams*). His sensibility, both with text and movement (he's choreographed some of the shows he's been in), should be just right as Molina, the queer Argentine prisoner obsessed with the movies and the spunky female inmate (played by Tracy Michaelides). Set during Argentina's Dirty War, the immersive production - the first theatre production ever performed in the Don Jail - is guaranteed to set off.

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 Michael Healey scores again with 1979, his take on Joe Clark's political failures Jan 11, 2019

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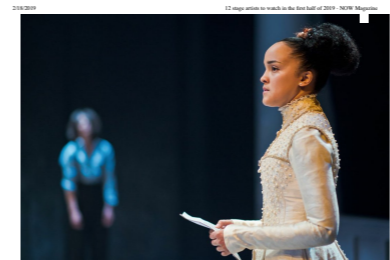


**AMAKA UMEB**

**What:** Ensemble member in *Project: Humanity's Towards Youth: A Play On Radical Hope*, February 25 to March 16 at Streetcar CrossStreet ([streetcartheatre.com](#)).

**Why:** Umeb helped ground some of 2018's best ensembles. Among the fast-talking soccer warrior of *The Wolves*, her iconic goatee, who internalized the stress of their win streak into agony in the pit of her stomach, was a stand-out. And in a cast of big comedic turns in Shakespeare's *Dream in High Park*, her Hermia helped sell the heartbreak caused by Puck's spells. She plays a wide variety of roles in *Andrew Kuehler*'s new verbatim play, which uses excerpts of interviews with drama students from various countries to look at where the world is going.

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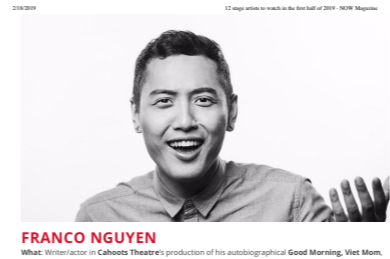


**BAHIA WATSON**

**What:** Actor in *Soulpepper's The Virgin Trial*, January 19 to February 3 at Young Centre ([soulpepper.ca](#)).

**Why:** Watson's steely gaze was a flagship image in 2017 for the Stratford Festival, where she starred as a young Queen Elizabeth in *Kate Hennig's* *The Virgin Trial*. Now the play's part of Soulpepper's winter season. Watson will also find out on January 27 if she's a winner at the Screen Actors Guild Awards for her ensemble nomination for *Barbra's The Handmaid's Tale*. The two roles - a obvious by necessity royal, and an innocent enslaved by a brutal regime - showcase her dramatic range, and her portrayal of Queen Bess hints at her comedic gifts, too. We could see more of those, soon; Watson and Lisa Paul's new cabaret project, madcap, *reviewed material* at a TED talk in October.

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**FRANCO NGUYEN**

**What:** Writer/actor in *Caboose Theatre's* production of his autobiographical *Good Morning, Viet Mom*, February 16 to March 3 at the Daniels Spectrum Aki Studio ([caboose.ca](#)).

**Why:** Nguyen had breakthroughs in two stage milieus this year. His BPOC sketch troupe *Tall Boys II Men* were comedic hits at the 2018 editions of *Oakleaf's Toronto Fringe Festival* and *JFL42*. And his solo 2017 Fringe hit *Soaring Through Liquid Skies* got a Next Stage Theatre Festival remount, a new title and more rave reviews for its funny mix of story, footage and confessions about his difficulties understanding his Vietnamese mother's connections to her native land. The Second City alumnaus has charisma and energy to spare, and *Good Morning, Viet Mom's* story of a second-generation Canadian growing to understand the sacrifices of his parents moved its sold-out audience. After this run it tours to Mississauga and Victoria, BC.

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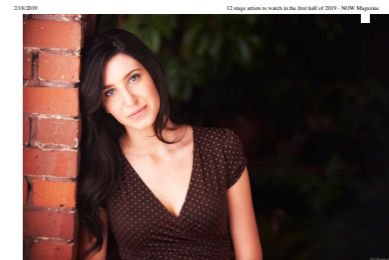


**CRYSTAL PITE AND JONATHON YOUNG**

**What:** The dance/theatre artists return to Canadian Stage with the Toronto premiere of *Revisor*, March 7 to 16 at Bluma Appel ([canadianstage.com](#)).

**Why:** This is the third production Pite and Young have made together and follows the long international run of their Olivier Award-winning exploration of trauma, *Beethoven*. Inspirations include Nikolai Gogol's farcical *The Government Inspector*, in which a "revisor" doctors legal documents, but that doesn't mean the work will be comedic, or even lighthearted. Young has worked mainly on the text, which Pite uses with her dancers to generate choreography. The co-creators are charting new ground with their symbiotic intermingling of text and movement.

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**HAILEY GILLIS**

**What:** Actor in *Rose: A New Musical*, billed by *Soulpepper* as their most ambitious production to date, January 17 to February 24 at Young Centre ([soulpepper.ca](#)).

**Why:** Gillis brings a great big voice and an equally large heart to all her work (*Spoon River, Onegin*). So she should be in her element as the title character - a woman who doesn't fit into her society and seeks her own path in life - in *Millic Rose* and Sarah Wilson's new musical. She and co-star Peter Fernandes - who plays Rose's best friend - have been building their characters for several years in workshops, so they know them intimately.

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**MARIE LAMBIN-GAGNON**

**What:** Choreographer Lambin-Gagnon's interactive performance installation *Slow Dance*, with members of *Toronto Dance Theatre*, plays in conjunction with *Jeanine Dunning's This Shape, We Are In* (see them together or apart!) January 23 to February 3 at the Winchester ([hell.org](#)).

**Why:** As much as a visual as a movement artist, Lambin-Gagnon comes at dance from an interesting angle. On the heels of her dreamy dancestage installation *White Elephant*, Lambin-Gagnon's new work is a walk-through conversation between the audience, TD dancers *Yuchiro Inoue*, Peter Kelly, Devon Snell and Margarita Sorok, objects and the environment that contains everything. The goal is to celebrate the intimacy and strength present in all things.

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