

À la recherche du temps présent : Une conversation entre les commissaires Ivanie Aubin-Malo et James Oscar

In Search of the “Coming Community”: A Conversation Between Curators Ivanie Aubin-Malo and James Oscar

La conversation suivante a eu lieu entre les commissaires Ivanie Aubin-Malo et James Oscar autour de la représentation actuelle de "Them Voices" de Lara Kramer, présentée au Festival TransAmériques du 27 au 29 mai 2021.

The following conversation took place between curators Ivanie Aubin-Malo and James Oscar surrounding the present performance of “Them Voices” by Lara Kramer being performed at the Festival TransAmericas Festival May 27-May29 2021

La conversation est celle d'une commissaire en danse et chorégraphe québécoise-wolastoq (Ivanie Aubin-Malo) et d'un critique d'art/conservateur afro-descendante (James Oscar), deux commissaires de deux générations et tous deux issus d'engagements concrets avec les enjeux auxquels sont actuellement confrontées les communautés artistiques BIPOC.

The conversation is one between a québécoise-wolastoq female performance curator/choreographer (Ivanie Aubin-Malo) and black art critic/ curator (James Oscar), two curators from two generations and both coming from concrete engagements with issues being presently faced by BIPOC artistic communities.

Leur discussion franche et inédite porte sur le projet actuel de Lara Kramer, *Them Voices*, dans les plus minutieux détails de sa dramaturgie, de ses contextes et des atmosphères globales liées à l'actuel moment post-pandémique de "préoccupation" pour l'équité sociale.

Their frank unedited discussion discusses Lara Kramer's present project *Them Voices*, in the minute details of its dramaturgy, contexts, and more general atmospheres that relate to the present post pandemic moment of “concern’ with social equity.

Partant du principe qu'il est indispensable de disposer d'une plateforme pour de telles discussions, les auteurs se plongent dans la pratique même de Lara Kramer, qui constitue un exemple brillant d'un tel espace de réflexion et d'engagement.

Starting from the premise of discussing the critical need for a platform for such discussions, they dive into the reality that Kramer's own practice itself provides a shining example of such a space of reflection and engagement.

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certainly death , the fragility of life, and the emptiness of a world without rituals and what the indigenous peoples call the Medicine Way, something is at an end , a new cycle definitely emerging J.G.

“Since this way of life is over, since this culture is over, the fiction of who we have assumed ourselves to be is also over ...We are not that. We were never that. It’s just that our survival in the system meant we had no choice but to pretend- even to ourselves to be that” —Juan Santos [a dear friend who passed in 2009]

James:

La médiation culturelle¹, parce que c'est un peu ça que tu fais en tant que commissaire, tu sais ce que je veux dire, c'est un peu ça le travail du commissaire. Je voulais commencer avec ...j'avais une question pour toi...² (Cultural exchange and dialogue surrounding art practice [médiation culturelle] , because that's what you do as a curator, you know what I mean, that's what the curator's job is. I wanted to start with... I have a question for you.) I'm just going to react to what you said regarding this situation of dialoguing on art practice and having been in a situation of constraint in being able to fluidly engage in a critical discourse³ surrounding art practice with fellow curator/ choreographers. My impression as somebody who lived in other places for quite

¹ It is important to note that this term is specific to the Quebec cultural sphere and refers to the realm of cultural discussion that happens around cultural objects, arts, performances etc. The term can be literally translated since in English “cultural mediation” has a completely different meaning in another context. It should be noted that it is of very serious interest that the government has seen fit to create a special department within the city’s cultural department just to develop the realm of “médiation culturelle”. The obvious question would be to ask, how much do the processes of BIPOC decolonizing principles appear at the centre of the government’s attempt to create a cultural service that addresses the discussions around culture and art?

² At various times, James Oscar speaks in French throughout the discussion but most of his dialogue is in English. In most cases, after any of his spontaneous French dialogue, English follows in brackets and sometimes vice-versa. Ivanie Aubin-Malo dialogue is only in French. Forthcoming versions of the text will be in entirely English and entirely French versions.

³ James in his use of discourse means, “Foucault adopted the term ‘discourse’ to denote a historically contingent social system that produces knowledge and meaning. He notes that discourse is distinctly material in effect, producing what he calls ‘practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak’. Discourse is, thus, a way of organising knowledge that structures the constitution of social relations through the collective understanding of the discursive logic and the acceptance of the discourse as social fact...discourses are produced by effects of power within a social order, and this power prescribes particular rules and categories which define the criteria for legitimating knowledge and truth within the discursive order. “ <https://criticallegalthinking.com/2017/11/17/michel-foucault-discourse/>

a long time. It's my impression that we are missing this ability to have a platform to exchange. How do you feel about that? Do you think we're missing that? Est ce qu'on manque quelque chose? Est ce que tu penses qu'on est vraiment à la hauteur maintenant, spécialement pour les communautés racisées mais même je me demande si cela fait l'état d'une plus grande réalité des arts canadiens et québécois? (*Are we missing something? Do you think we're really up to speed now, especially for racialized communities, but even I wonder if this makes the state of Canadian and Quebec arts more real?*) What do you think of this moment we are in right now. Do we have space for proper exchanges?

Ivanie: Qu'est ce qui me vient en tête en ce moment pour répondre à cette question c'est j'espère qu'on va pouvoir être indépendant des institutions qui sont établis et confortables, bon, avec certaines guillemets, parce que par exemple j'ai beaucoup d'ami(e)s en street dance et il y a des merveilleuses initiatives qui sont créées qui parlent de l'histoire du street dance puis ce sont des connaissances qui se sont accumulées à travers les années, dans l'expérience, par le storytelling. Maintenant, ces gens-là sont capables de le partager aux plus jeunes. Et les blancs qui font du street dance qui entendent ces récits, ça les met dans une position d'humilité, comment on peut contribuer à ça en comprenant, en conscientisant la charge de ce style et de ce mouvement donc pour moi ça m'apprends beaucoup sur comment je veux contribuer dans la communauté de la danse autochtone à Tio'tia:ke et j'ai envie d'aussi permettre à ces artistes autochtones d'être en lien avec d'autres artistes racisées qui n'ont pas nécessairement les mêmes circuits mais qui pratiquent leur art tous les jours, régulièrement. Il est important d'essayer de se dissocier des institutions et de partir du territoire et des gens.

James: In some ways, I'm coming from outside, having lived both in and out of this context. And people will always say, well, that's another city and you cannot compare. But is there a real sphere here for exchanging and creating discourse and counter discourses in Montreal/Quebec/Canadian context? And I think of this as important because once we have emergent discourses, or a counter discourse, it starts to question the environment. And I think there's a real hegemonic defensiveness right now to hold on to the power of *how we discuss the arts*. I feel like this is one of the biggest fights right now. Canada's biggest art magazine, *Canadian Art* is in danger of disappearing right now, citing problems with structural racism and other issues⁴ within the publication. It seems to me that all of this is an indication of a further destruction of the possible fluidity of counter-discourses coming to the centre as permanent fixtures since the magazine did offer some space for this and there are not many other places with a broad national appeal for these discussions. But also there is the importance of counter-narratives and mainstream discourses in general and having spaces to more generally discuss hegemonic centric narratives and discourses- the necessary dialogue regarding all discourse more generally, the entire state of discourse in general, not just about increasing the discourse about indigenous lives, about Black Lives, but about the more general scene in which these lives operate and seek to control their narratives. But I feel like we're missing something. And one of the things I would say to you after some of the preliminary talks we have had about our shared experiences is that I think it's the biggest thing we're lacking in Montreal. And I hope this will start to change! I think we

⁴ <https://canadianart.ca/features/a-statement-from-canadian-art-staff-and-board-on-our-equity-and-anti-oppression-actions/>
<https://hyperallergic.com/577899/the-persistence-of-structural-racism-in-canadian-cultural-institutions/>

really have to. I think people need to recognize what their capabilities are. Right? I mean, and work on that capability, right? I think you're lucky, because you're a choreographer and you're a curator, right? And I think you definitely have an idea of these roles. What I think we're missing is the valorization of other people in the ecosystem to "properly" also assume the role of curator. Lara brought us into a discursive curatorial role⁵ - to look carefully at contextualization and other ways to think, enter, or speak around this new work. Some of these words like "intergenerational" and "trauma" are being used and being appropriated and used back against us⁶, right? We need to, just like what you said in our previous conversations, we need to move away from these institutions, maybe create our own. But what I believe we need is a new vocabulary and certainly to understand the discourse that comes to form around the appropriation of certain concepts. You know, we need to start creating new words/ concepts, because many of these words are becoming cliché. A lot of the words we use like "embodiment". Of course, it doesn't mean that what's being done are not embodiment techniques, but I sometimes feel like the meaning of what "embodiment" might mean, might be getting lost. I like the idea of creating new forms of discourse around work like Lara's performance/s, where we might be *speculating concepts*⁷ grounded in thinking through ongoing engagements with live performance. But the reason I'm saying this is because I feel like you have the dancers, you have the artists, but are we missing people who can match their experience with examining discourse that can also engage in a concrete manner with these types of work Lara is constructing. Do you know what I mean? I don't think it's a safe thing to always assume that you can just grab anyone and hope that they're going to be able to lead these discussions. That's all I would say. I think that it's important to bring people in - an indigenous scholar, knowledge keeper for instance, you know, because I think everybody has a role that can add up to a rich dialogue. If there's anything we can "applaud" is that in Eurocentric institutions there are the ways they have been steadfast in

⁵ In a dialogue following this conversation, both interlocutors agreed on the well written consideration of curatorial practice in working through the following tasks: "1. the development of a pedagogy of dialogue, creating dialogues between different artworks and objects, 2. dialogues between curatorial positions, 3. dialogues between works of art and various publics, and 4. finally, facilitating the etymological notion of 'care' within the art class."

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328275668_Curating_as_a_dialogue-based_strategy_in_art_education

All of these roles could be said to address the role in which Lara Kramer brought us into to work on the documentation of the performance at the early beginning stages of the construction of the *Them Voice*.

A previous similar experience like this took place January- February 2021 at Toronto's Dancemakers with the production of her performance, *Eating Bones and Licking Bread*.

[http://larakramer.ca/wp-](http://larakramer.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LKD_EatingBonesLickingBread_Notes_Extended_By_James_Oscar_Jan2020.pdf)

[content/uploads/2020/02/LKD_EatingBonesLickingBread_Notes_Extended_By_James_Oscar_Jan2020.pdf](http://larakramer.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/LKD_EatingBonesLickingBread_Notes_Extended_By_James_Oscar_Jan2020.pdf)

⁶ Major Canadian curator Cheyanne Turions has been uncovered as falsifying an indigenous identity garnering over \$100 000 in grants in doing so. <https://vancouver.sun.com/news/local-news/vancouver-arts-curators-indigenous-ancestry-claims-panned-as-pretendian>

<https://twitter.com/nomoredface/status/1371990021180391428>

Her own website apology employs decolonial language to justify her "mistake".

<https://cheyanneturions.wordpress.com/2021/02/08/the-histories-we-carry/>

⁷ Lara and I have been talking a lot lately about the idea of this latest work, *Them Voices*, as being a "living landscape", which is a term I borrowed from an Australian environmental/ landscape thinker, who thought of this term in looking at the cosmology of Aboriginal people: "The qualities of the Australian land and landscape have had profound influence on indigenous people and more recent migrants alike. For Aboriginal the land- country in Aboriginal English is nourishing terrain. Not only have Aboriginal people...occupied every part of the land, adapted to it, and it to them*, it is also for them living landscape* people by mythological beings from dream time." (Yencken, Fien, Sykes, 2000)

designating specialist roles assigned to designated experts for the “successful” dissemination of their hegemonic ideologies. Like it or not it has been pretty effective in constructing the current hegemony we are seeking to dismantle. And of course, in our institutions, the roles will be much more fluid, but nevertheless I think it is critical for us to use the best people in our arsenal to work in building these counter-narratives. I think we need to maybe make sure that we critically engage people in all these places and roles you know what I mean? A white journalist who wishes to see an indigenous painter’s work through *already set lenses* is a sadly persisting dangerous reality. But, you know, you really need some indigenous scholars, or racialized scholars, to really get in this conversation, you know what I mean- BIPOC scholars elaborating new narratives. There are many newly re-established and newly emerging BIPOC multidisciplinary artists and this is great in terms of the elaboration of rituals that are important for our community and for representation. But I believe beyond this proliferation of cultural production and even of production of knowledge that accompanies this important advance of BIPOC artists and their cultural production, it must be an imperative, in the foreground of the art scene, to gain control over the transmission/dissemination of these knowledges (de prendre contrôle des transmissions des connaissances). Pas juste la production des connaissances mais ses transmissions, et je pense qu'on est vraiment dans un manque très grave maintenant et ça se voit vraiment avec les choses qui se passent avec le phénomène des “pretendians”- cette situation où les Blancs sont en train de se déclarer autochtone. And getting into Lara’s present project, when you come to the piece and see the profound dialogue with Hugo the lighting designer and Simon the sound designer all assisting in these after-rehearsal discussions that are leading to greater understandings of the productions of knowledge, the atmospheres, and any new discourses that may be emergent in *Them Voices*.

How do you feel about the inclusion of everyone in these discussions we have been having around the work? Is that something that could be interesting in terms of a new way to work? I think it's very interesting to be very honest with you. I love the idea of the whole team in a production talking about the piece in-depth, and thus they have all been contributing to creating a discourse around the work. I've never seen the whole team in a production talking about the piece, all contributing to creating a discourse around the work. Why do you think it's important - why do you think this approach of bringing people like us who will write about the piece, bringing us in before and not waiting for after the performance? We're already inside of the performance (of *Them Voices*), in a way you know?

Ivanie:

Oui, pour moi en tant qu'invitée, à contribuer au processus, mais aussi contribuer en écrivant sur la pièce, je me questionne sur comment j'absorbe les messages qui sont envoyés. Je te dirais que pour moi, ce n'est pas nouveau parce que ça fait un bout que je collabore surtout avec Tanya Lukin Linklater qui est une artiste qui considère l'apport de tous ces collaborateurs/collaboratrices, qui crée et nourrit un espace de dialogue tout au long du processus. Il est primordial de valoriser l'apport de chaque personne dans le cercle puisqu'ils arrivent avec leur expérience, et on doit prendre le temps d'écouter chaque vision pour vraiment créer ensemble, sinon on perd notre responsabilité en tant qu'artiste de partager notre vision de la création, de s'y sentir inclus.e et amplifier sa portée. C'est justement ce que j'ai apprécié de notre première rencontre avec Lara. En fait, je ne m'attendais pas trop à aller dans ces eaux-là, mais j'ai

sentie vraiment plusieurs couches dans son travail, qui reflètent également son expérience en tant qu'artiste, mais aussi là où elle me semble rendue dans sa vie. Je me disais que toutes ces choses-là sont bien sûr mélangées, puis assemblées, puis la pratique permet de transformer ses habitudes, une certaine inertie puis d'aller plus loin. Et c'est pour ça que j'ai autant foi en la danse, puisque ça permet d'aller au-delà de nos pensées pour trouver des solutions, un univers de possibilités, par le corps et la création. Aussi de développer nos relations avec des êtres non-humains, ce qui est très présent dans le travail de Lara et j'apprécie beaucoup cet aspect. Je considère que, oui, la pratique de Lara pour *Them Voices* est très inclusive et respectueuse. Le fait qu'elle nous invite à participer à la dramaturgie et discuter après les enchaînements est une pratique qui reconnaît l'expérience de chacun et qui amplifie aussi la portée de l'œuvre.

James: Mais c'est un peu la décolonisation, ça? Isn't that decolonization in a way?

Ivanie: Oui, mais je sais que Hugo (lighting designer) a l'habitude d'intégrer assez tôt les processus dans lequel il s'implique puisqu'il sait que ça offre une possibilité d'être encore plus sensible à une myriade d'éléments qui entourent la création, pour enfin les mettre en lumière lors de la traversée (de la performance). Je sais que Simon est en train de découvrir sa pratique artistique dans le rôle de concepteur sonore. Pour moi, c'est un élément hyper important parce que ce dernier valorise l'apprentissage au sein d'un processus professionnel. Parce qu'apprendre peut arriver à tout moment, pour tout le monde. Bien sûr, certaines personnes arrivent mieux à nommer et traduire leurs pensées et leurs visions, et c'est souvent parce qu'ils ont plus d'expérience dans le sujet abordé. Pour d'autres, le discours sera moins clair et approfondi, mais il peut tout de même mener à des découvertes. Comme moi par rapport à Lara, je sens que mon discours est moins mûr, mais je me prête tout de même au jeu. J'accepte ce rôle, même s'il est parfois déstabilisant, puisque cela me permet de rencontrer et d'apprendre, tout en offrant aussi un potentiel pour un.e autre d'apprendre.

James :

Je pense que je n'ai pas très bien expliqué ce que je disais, mais oui, je pense que tu as compris, mais juste pour ajouter, je pense qu'une des choses que je n'ai peut-être pas très bien expliquée, c'est que mon rôle est aussi de créer un discours et de découvrir de nouveaux discours à travers son travail. Mais aussi de les mettre à la disposition en dialogue avec la communauté internationale à l'extérieur. Il me semble que ce n'est pas souvent fait à Montréal. C'est peut-être ce que j'aurais dû expliquer dans les commentaires au début.... Je m'intéresse à regarder la pratique locale ici et voir leurs rapports à la conversation artistique globale. Parfois, nous sommes dans notre propre bulle, et bien sûr, il y a d'excellentes revues comme DFDANSE, mais est-ce que la situation actuelle de réseaux entre nos discours et les discours mondial est suffisant ? Est-ce nécessaire ? Faut-il le faire ? Cette connexion à une voix et une situation de discours international ? Néanmoins, je trouve qu'il est très important d'établir des liens.

(I think I didn't explain very well what I was saying, but yes, I think you understood, but just to add, I think one of the things I may not have explained very well is that my role is also to create a discourse and to discover new discourses through one's work. But also to make them available in dialogue with the international community outside. It seems to me that this is not often done in Montreal. Maybe that's what I should have explained in the comments at the beginning I'm interested in looking at local practice here and seeing their relationship to the global art

conversation. Sometimes we are in our own bubble, and of course there are great journals like DFDANSE, but is the current situation of networking between our discourses and the global discourses enough? Is it necessary? Is it necessary? This connection to a voice and a situation of international discourse? Nevertheless, I find it very important to make those connections.)

So when I'm working on this stuff with Lara, it's coming through from its own logic – the internal logic of the works- *sui generis* and novel forms of cultural production and novel forms of productions of knowledge that emerge from her work, but also there is feeding these larger dialogues beyond our Quebec and Canadian ecosystems. I am not sure how much Europe has engaged concretely with indigenous forms of knowledge production. There is certainly a lot of talk about “decolonization” in Europe but not sure how indigenous cosmology is placed in those conversations. This general blanket idea and term “decolonization” often feels not specific enough, especially as regards the variant in each locale of the various colonial pasts.

Ivanie:

J'ai envie de répondre comme ça, puisque tout à l'heure, tu parlais d'écosystème. Merci de me dire que tu es un commissaire puisqu'effectivement, je n'étais pas à l'affût puis c'est merveilleux de savoir cela maintenant. Après, c'est difficile de connaître tout le monde et savoir tout ce qui se passe en Art. Tu sembles faire partie de ces gens qui voient large, mais le plus large que nous voulons aller, je pense que ce n'est jamais assez. Nous sommes tous là pour créer des connexions à notre échelle. Par contre, je suis d'accord que c'est parfois trop cloisonné. Je suis d'accord que c'est important de décroisonner, et c'est justement grâce à cette philosophie qu'on s'est rencontré. Si Lara n'avait pas reconnu le fait qu'il fallait décroisonner son cercle, on ne se serait jamais rencontré. Décroisonner son cercle est parfois un acte de grande bravoure. Il faut se sentir prêt.e en tant qu'artiste de rencontrer des nouvelles personnes qui vont te mettre au défi mais qui vont aussi te faire voir plus grand. Oser le décroisonnement nous met aussi à une place de vulnérabilité. C'est ce dont j'ai envie de travailler dans ma pratique. Vraiment. Au quotidien, je veux offrir aux personnes plutôt silencieuses que je rencontre un espace ouvert à entendre ce qu'ils ont à dire, parce que je ressens souvent de la retenue, alors qu'il est évident que leur discours n'est aucunement malveillant.

James:

S'auto-censurer ! Auto-censoring yourself!

Ivanie:

Même pour Lara, je pense qu'elle a beaucoup à partager dans *Them Voices*. Mon rôle est donc, encore une fois, de nourrir un espace de communication bienveillante, de croire en notre potentiel expressif et à notre potentiel de capter les messages. Chercher à comprendre le discours⁸ qui motive la performance, pour orienter mon discours en relation avec ce que l'artiste recherche. Pour *Them Voices*, c'est de pousser encore plus ses *edges* (*extrémités*) parce qu'on a souvent parlé de *edges* puis de *micro-macro*. Je désire donc nourrir et intégrer ces termes dans mon discours, pour lui permettre de transgresser ses limites, ses perspectives. Et je ne sais pas comment cela pourrait se traduire dans sa pratique au quotidien, mais j'espère que ça puisse la

⁸ Ivanie fait référence à un message, une perspective, un mode de pensée.

guider vers une bascule. Une bascule de son travail pour l'amener à se redécouvrir. De pousser le risque d'oser, parce que c'est rare qu'on s'en va réellement dans nos limites. C'est ce que Lara recherche, donc si je reflète couramment son discours, elle peut continuellement pousser plus loin et ça aide à réactiver la direction vers où elle choisit d'aller, car cet objectif est perpétuellement renommé et valorisé.

James:

Fred Moten, un philosophe Afro-Américain dit,

“What's at stake is fugitive movement in an out of the frame whatever externally imposed social logic—a movement of escape, the stealth of the stolen that can be said, since it inheres in every closed circle to break every enclosure” Fred Moten, *The Case of Blackness* 2008

That black life is about fugitive moments, movements that we always have to be going back and forth doing - fugitive movements to continuously transgress the line. Consistently we have to be moving and I like what you're saying. And maybe we can just talk about the transgressing limits you are talking about in getting into Lara's work. This “micro and macro”, you have brought up because in our after-rehearsal conversations with Lara you spoke about her vision and rapport to her surroundings constantly moving between the micro and macro view of that world she inhabits on stage, and also how you have spoken about her always going over and above a “line”. What brought you to see this “macro and micro” in her work? Qu'est-ce qui, dans son travail, t'a amené à voir le micro et le macro ?

Ivanie:

Je pense que c'est elle qui l'a communiquée et je me suis dit qu'il y a des concepts comme ça dans une pratique qui semblent pouvoir convenir à n'importe quel moment. Essayer d'y revenir souvent et au fur et à mesure, on polit notre approche à ces concepts. Dans l'acharnement, tu peux y trouver beaucoup de potentiel. Alors *micro-macro* pour moi a été un concept clair grâce auquel j'ai réalisé que c'est vrai que Lara *en veut plus*. Il faut ajouter de la matière, il en faut 2 fois plus. Il faut 2 fois plus de terre, il faut 2 fois plus de matériel parce que le tableau créé apparaît petit dans ce grand espace mais après ça, elle va amener soit un cheval pour enfant ou justement des miroirs qui sont à peine perceptibles par rapport à la grande scénographie, qui lui offre du contraste. À première vue, tu ne remarques pas le miroir ou tu ne remarques pas les petits détails. Pour moi, ce qui est important de nourrir dans un travail performatif, c'est le micro. Parce que tu veux justement que les gens aiguisent leur sensibilité, puis leur regard dans une grande scénographie. Le travail de lenteur permet de voir les textures. C'est quelque chose que j'avais remarqué au premier enchaînement. Dans la lenteur, j'ai commencé à observer la texture de la semelle des bottes. Il y a tellement de beaux reliefs et c'est le travail du spectateur ou du participant à faire ça. Découvrir les reliefs, les textures et la grandeur de chaque chose qui permet d'entrer dans un investissement tout en finesse pour dévoiler l'invisible, le ressenti, révéler le poids de l'ambiance. Avec des ressentis comme ça, on a envie d'être plus présent avec chaque chose. Être silencieux, observateur.trice, à l'écoute, laisser jaillir les sensations et émotions qui émergent de soi et des environs. Ces choses-là sont pour moi évidentes, mais elles sont souvent mises de côté par quiconque, moi incluse, puisqu'on est constamment saturé et bombardé de trop d'informations. On est amené à ne plus considérer ce qui se passe en dessous de nos multiples

tâches à faire. Nous avons oublié le potentiel guérisseur de la patience. Tu sais, ceci est ma pratique aussi en tant que chorégraphe. Comment puis-je amener les gens à ralentir et focaliser sur une seule chose puis ensuite de reconnaître la finesse des différentes particules qui nous entourent (qui peuvent aussi être des états) et qui permet de maintenir un certain équilibre.

James:

GRANDE PAUSE ET SOUPIR DE RECONNAISSANCE POUR CE QUE VIENT DE DIRE IVANIE.....

BIG PAUSE AND SIGH OF RECOGNITION FOR WHAT IVANIE HAS JUST SAID.....

I think what comes out for me is that in everything you're saying and because I think the experience of being how should we put it...I'm not gonna say oppressed, but I'm not gonna say invisible, but I'm gonna say... the experience of being psychically and physically assaulted continuously in a society. And the experience of being told that we have to live through a certain neurotypicality instead of neurodiversity⁹. So we're consistently being assaulted physically, emotionally, and we're consistently having to, to move, you know, we don't have time to just take things in. So I'm thinking that this act of micro and macro and especially when you get to the micro, it's about intimacy. And I feel like when you're saying this, I think part of this - the problem, I would say, not just for indigenous and racialized people but rather I mean, generally, across the society, we know there's a problem with a lack of intimacy, right? But I think there's an acute sensation among bipoc people that we want *our intimacy*, right. But at the same time, with the constant watching of our lives, we're lacking *our intimacy*. At one point, in *Them Voices*, Lara seems to be almost sickened by the idea of being watched. She seems to want to erase any kind of vision but also at once to dive completely into what vision is and what vision is not. Spying and being with a certain intimacy of what vision is or what it may not be - being close up in those micro moments of our lives in the same way Lara's protagonist in *Them Voices* seems to be...spying and being with an intimacy that is so close and palpable that no sooner is ripped away and then wanting it back and then when it may or may not come back in that past or another form, starting to feel a sense of morbidity towards that intimacy that we once wanted and that now comes back to us. There is a kind of disassociation I think that we experience in this constant need to move between the micro and macro "for our survival"?

And we're always on display in a way or at least it feels like that- a pressure to always be with the "on" switch to protect ourselves? But we don't want to be on display, we don't always want to be "on". So I think it's interesting, because also, in the very first sessions before you joined us, the legendary Montreal performance artist and collaborator on *Them Voices*, Peter James said something very important and destabilizing for me. He noticed Lara on stage and said that (a paraphrase)- "You know, you always have to be careful of those moments of posturing - "being too cute" on stage. Be careful of showing too much." So I feel like when you're talking about the micro and macro, it's this. It's the game of the trickster I would suggest, and thus that we have to remember to keep in check, but also to keep crossing across modes of being but not getting stuck in any just one moment of being or non-being. It's the trickster- qui vient, qui ralentit, c'est une façon de cloisonner, de décloisonner (- it's the trickster which comes, which slows down, it is a

⁹ See Erin Manning *The Minor Gesture* 2016 regarding "neurodiversity".

way to partition, to compartmentalize) - open/ close . And it's different than a spectacle, because in a spectacle, everything is macro, do you know what I mean? And you're not really allowed to get into anything intimate, because the whole job of the spectacle is to de-personalize the person watching it, you know, and I guess if there's going to be a *decolonization of the spectacle* , it's going to be...because I think you brought up the micro and macro, because I've talked to Lara for lots of hours for our upcoming book and we've never talked about that before. I will ask her, but I think it's you who brought it up? You think she brought it up? I'm not sure. Maybe she was encouraged by you. But it's the first time I heard somebody talk about this in reference to her work. Yes Lara and I talk about deceleration in her work and there's beautiful articles about this in her work. But this “micro and macro” way of seeing that she is engaged in during her performance and especially in *how she must be seeing the world during her performance*, ...even if she brought it up first you have dove deeper into it and developed it further- and how certainly the notion of how “micro and macro” ways of seeing relating to *Them Voices*. What I add to that is this idea of *the layer of intimacy*, you know, *and of playing the game as a trickster*, to find our intimacy but at the same time to also be defiant against what we find. Just kind of a reaction to what you're saying. I feel like it's a good observation because you say that you want people to slow down and to focus on one thing, right? Why is it important for people to focus on one thing? Because we're usually focusing on too many things I guess?

Ivanie:

Si mon attention est dispersée, je ne peux pas recevoir. Et si mon coeur et mon esprit focalisent sur une seule chose, ça me permet de recevoir. Ça me permet de me régénérer. Et je trouve que le système de surconsommation nous amène à faire trop de choses. On est trop partout, que c'est comme trop, trop, trop. On est poussé à *faire, donner, présenter*, au lieu de *recevoir, observer, digérer*.

C'est là qu'on devient une société qui n'est pas durable, qu'on est constamment en train de faire une seule moitié de cycle. Mais il faut offrir du temps au cycle du dessous, au ressourcement. Dernièrement je le dis souvent, mais pour moi, je perçois la danse comme une sorte de système digestif de la société. Danser permet de digérer des affaires, de déposer des ressentis, de déposer des états. Et après les déposer en terre. J'ai envie de permettre à des personnes d'entendre des voix autochtones, parce que ces voix reconnaissent la puissance du territoire, puis qu'on doit se déposer dans ça, puis qu'on doit aussi amener les gens à se déposer en terre.

James:

That's beautiful. And you know what's interesting, and it's I mean, I have a lot of practices. I have one practice where I'm working with jazz musicians. And that's speculative discourse we are seeking to create together. We're presently working on a project on crime scenes. I also work informally on a project with a psychiatrist and she recently sent me an article about how “we see” and the ways of seeing and that to me is what you're bringing up with this idea of looking at the macro and micro in Lara's work, and also in regards to *seeing* indigenous bodies, not just the bodies, but seeing how we need to – “comment on doit se déposer en terre” (how we rest ourselves into the earth). After rehearsal, you had brought up the insects- the ants, you know. And looking at the movement of the ants for you was another way – ‘new way of seeing’ how we move and the decision process, because you talked about finding the extremities of where the ants start and stop in their movements. I think it's you who talked about looking up and shifting our gaze and not remaining static. So I very much like this idea of *redirecting our gaze*, you

brought up. I would name this a *rethinking our vision*. You know. And I think that's what you're talking about when you talk about micro macro, because it's a shift of vision. And I think that's what you're talking about when you talk about considering the micro and macro in looking at how Lara's perspective might be to the surroundings on her stage, because it's a shift of vision? I'm not an expert on exactly what people say "decolonization" is about, but I definitely know that changing *the way we see* is definitely one of the main things that needs to happen. And *the way we talk about the way we see*. What's interesting with that is there's a poet from the 19th century, Gerard Manley Hopkins and he talks about *inscape*¹⁰. So it's like the vision you have inside of you. It's just interesting, because I think what you're bringing up is this, this changing the way of seeing, and I don't know how this came up but I was talking about the notion of the *event-horizon* from astrophysics and how this may relate to Lara's *vision* on stage. This *event-horizon* which I don't completely understand, but all I know is that in some other part of the universe there's some weird thing floating like a black hole or something and the way we see things is literally shifted without a machine, without virtual reality lenses. If we could ever physically get there, apparently, when you're in front of the black hole, there's something that shifts our way of seeing of an object moving forwards or backwards or something like that. And it's strange, because maybe if we had that physical entity of an *event horizon* here, to actually see these shifts palpably, more people might, I don't know, understand the verifiability of the norm of a *shifting perspective*¹¹. Because it's the whole thing I mean, isn't colonization very much about imposing one normative way of seeing. In the late 19th century/ 20th century, we see it with the photograph, you know, and the photograph becomes, or before with painting with the Impressionists. And with photography, and this whole practice of *establishing seeing* through the literal *reproduction of reality* in real time and before that it's the novel- ces romans étaient plutôt des outils de colonisation, du moins dans le monde anglophone - le mode de narration de la nation - des nations occidentales. So I really like what you're talking about, about this way of seeing and what I would say can be our *rethinking our vision*, and what you call *redirecting our gaze, shifting our gaze* you know, and you talk about this finding the extremities/ limits of how we see or look at things, and especially how Lara inside of her piece is constantly having to shift her perspective from the macro and the micro of the landscape she is traversing on the stage- and yes I love this idea of "se déposer en terre".

¹⁰ **Inscape** and **instress** are complementary and enigmatic concepts about individuality and uniqueness derived by the poet [Gerard Manley Hopkins](#) from the ideas of the medieval philosopher [Duns Scotus](#).^[1] Inscape has been rendered variously as: external design, aesthetic conception, intrinsic beauty, the intrinsic form of a thing, a form perceived in nature, the individual self, the expression of the inner core of individuality, the peculiar inner nature of things and persons, expressed in form and gesture, and an essence or identity embodied in a thing.^[2] These twin concepts are what his most famous poems are about.

[Hopkins] felt that everything in the universe was characterized by what he called *inscape*, the distinctive design that constitutes individual identity. This identity is not static but dynamic. Each being in the universe 'selves,' that is, enacts its identity. And the human being, the most highly selfed, the most individually distinctive being in the universe, recognizes the inscape of other beings in an act that Hopkins calls *instress*, the apprehension of an object in an intense thrust of energy toward it that enables one to realize specific distinctiveness...^[3]
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Inscape_and_instress

¹¹ One of the biggest shifts from Western lenses in anthropology has been the notion of perspectivism that the Amazonian scholar Eduardo Viveiros de Castro has been elaborating, "that aspect of Amerindian thought which has been called its 'perspectival quality' (Arhem 1993): the conception, common to many peoples of the continent, according to which the world is inhabited by different sorts of subjects or persons, human and non-human, which apprehend reality from distinct points of view..." Viveiros de Castro 1998

Ivanie: En fait, t'as parlé de photographe. Et j'ai eu une interaction avec le photographe qui est venu pour documenter la présentation de Lara. J'avais presque envie de lui dire de ne pas focaliser sur son corps à elle. Il faut photographier ce qu'elle évoque, parce qu'il est évident pour toi et moi qu'elle souhaite se décentraliser.

James: Décentraliser l'objet.

Ivanie: Oui, l'objet qui est le corps. Par exemple, je suis contente d'avoir osé filmer la fourmie qui était juste à côté de moi pendant la performance, et qui faisait totalement écho à la façon dont Lara faisait des tours autour de son *vaisseau* ou de sa scénographie. C'était comme la fourmie qui transportait quelque chose de très grand et de manière indirecte. Cette dernière ne pouvait pas prédire où cet objet-là voulait aller, puis c'est un peu ce que Lara faisait avec son sac, même plusieurs de ces sacs.

Et dans cette pratique d'écriture ici, j'espère offrir à certaines personnes qui sont plus sensibles au mots de quand même connecter à la contribution performative de Lara. Hugo parlait de "expandre", "expandre par la lumière, expandre par le son". Comment on peut expandre de toutes les manières qui soient le message que Lara veut transmettre ou juste l'expérience que vit Lara.

James : I mean it really takes everything you're saying. First it takes the slowing down, right. The deceleration and telling people, but not "telling" people- de suggérer que, pour changer sa façon d'être, on est amené à regarder un spectacle, un show. À comprendre que ce spectacle n'est pas là pour notre loisir. Comprendre, comprendre les spectacles, les représentations de spectacles. Understand, understand the shows, the performances of shows. (To understand that this performance, this show is not there for entertainment. Understand, understand the shows, the "representation" of shows. To understand also that the show is not there for politics. To understand that that show is not there for something specifically defined that you might have participated in in the past or you might participate in the future. Neither is the show a ritual. It's not some kind of collective ritual, personal ritual. It's none of these words that we know. It's just "what it is when you arrive" and just be there. *Be in there. Be there !* And don't consume. Breathe. Breathe in what you see and breathe in what you don't see. *And look at the apex of the triangle, the top of the triangle, not just the sides, and take a look, maybe the triangle is moving.* Maybe close your eyes for a while, while you're looking at the performance, which is what I do when I'm looking at Lara's work sometimes. I close my eyes and I breathe, then I open them. Discover new ways of breathing, of seeing or of not seeing. But certainly don't come with any... try and get rid of your baggage. Try and realize that what is there (on stage) is a "tabula rasa". It's a clean slate. And she's decided to put things on top of the slate. These are not objects or the objects that are there are not necessarily the objects you think are there. Neither are they a representation of something. They are *just what they are*. They are there just for that. So I think if you're talking about what Hugo (the lighting designer) said, "how to expand" I mean, the first thing is to understand that we need to rewind everything that we usually come with, right? But is that asking a lot from a spectator? Not necessarily, because we don't expect anything from the spectator. We just expect them to be there. Leave if they want, spend as much time if they want,

there's no time limit. You don't have to sit, you can sleep. The space is there for whatever you want to do. But the point is to realize that what's in front of you, is a scene that you think you've seen before but that you've not seen before. On my part, the way I usually look at performances right now. And it comes partly from a discussion with the Lebanese choreographer/ sound artist/ philosopher Jassem Hindi, who is one of Lara's collaborators. So, influenced by my discussion with Jassem, my approach to performance for the next few years will be looking at the space on stage as a "scene of a crime". Which means you come to something that you've never seen before. Because that's what the "scene of a crime" is. The scene of a crime is you arrive, and it's something unexpected. There's *a different arrangement of things*. If you come there and you assume something, you're never going to be able to understand what the crime is, right? Or what the crime might have been. So I've been using that optic. And for me, it's not necessarily when I see the "scene of a crime", I don't mean a literal crime, although there is a crime that definitely could be understood. And I think we know what that crime is, you know, I mean, it is really what was done to the indigenous people in Canada. Right. But at the same time, that scene of a crime that we see there- that Lara has set up. I think it's there for us to discover and to see not necessarily something that she's showing. But it is something like you're seeing as she's "evoking". And also trying to discover something that she is not showing. So that's the way I think I like to try and understand. Yeah, to go in there with as least baggage as you can. In Baudrillard's book, *The Perfect Crime*, he says,

“Ceci est l’histoire d’un crime - du meurtre de la réalité. Et de l’extermination d’une illusion — l’illusion vitale, l’illusion radicale du monde. Le réel ne disparaît pas dans l’illusion, c’est l’illusion qui disparaît dans la réalité intégrale... Hélas, le crime n’est jamais parfait... Si le crime n’est jamais parfait, la perfection, elle, est toujours criminelle, comme son nom l’indique. Dans le crime parfait, c’est la perfection elle-même qui est le crime. comme dans la transparence du mal, c’est la transparence elle-même qui est le mal.”

So what I like about this, as he says of the crime, what's important here is that it's not the crime, that's the crime. Right? It's the perfection of the crime that's the crime. And I think in this territory here (Canada), unfortunately, they've almost accomplished and maybe you can challenge me on this, but they've tried to accomplish this perfect crime. Trying to hide the crimes committed against the multitude of indigenous communities across this country in Canada. And they keep, I think a lot of times in politics or in university, they keep trying to unpack the crime. Ils essaient de décortiquer le crime même, mais il n’y a personne qui essaie de décortiquer la perfection du crime. (They try to unravel the crime itself, but there is no one who tries to unravel the perfection.) Nobody is trying to unpack the so-called “perfection of the crime”, the silence and erasure of the crime, which is what you see on stage with Lara's work. You see the evocation, the atmospheres, because to me, that's what we need to start unpacking- not just the crimes but the actual atmospheres that surround/ed those crimes and that still infuse our everyday lives in this country. Education, the atmospheres, because to me, that's what we need to start unpacking. We know that there was the Residential School System, we know there are missing and murdered Indigenous women. But what are the atmospheres that surround this violent amoral/immoral infernality ? Because to me, it is those atmospheres that propel and still propel these crimes, it continues the crime. And I think we can continue to go to court, we can continue to march but we need to change the “atmospheres” which to my mind still hang heavy above our everyday lives. We need to unpack that atmosphere, because it's hanging heavy for me in

Canada. That's what Canada is about. Because Canada for me, it feels like that atmosphere. It feels like a deeply hidden silent cold¹² deranged cruelty that led and continues to lead to these crimes against our indigenous populations. Do you know what I mean? And that's why I like Lara's work because for me Lara's work unpacks the crime in a different way- it unpacks the *atmospheres of the crime*. Every time she moves around the stage or stops, it's not something specific but it's the atmospheres that you have to see- C'est l'atmosphère qu'on doit décortiquer (It is the atmosphere that we have to unpack). Expanding our ways you know. I think we've described that you know, but I think it's really important to have to create this kind of discourse and to make it readable for people- de le vulgariser. To make it readable. Moi, qu'est ce qui m'intéresse sur la scène, c'est les atmosphères. C'est là, moi j'y vais. Moi j'y participe. I go to a performance of Lara's work and especially in this latest work (*Them Voices*) in an almost post pandemic apparent social justice "concerned" world, because I want to experience and I want to understand **things** that I don't understand. In looking at *Them Voices* without a language but through the air coming into me, I breathe in. I breathe it out. And that's how I think I can understand some of the regimes, configurations, narratives, and counter-narratives related to the indigenous situation in this country. Not by reading about events but about going and watching somebody like Lara reenact our present which seems very stifled. Notre présent semble très contraint. On est comme dans un... C'est vraiment un moment d'impasse. Ce n'est pas un moment de victoire. Mais alors en le regardant (en regardant et en voyant) on peut vivre un petit peu de victoire. (Our present seems very constrained. We're like in a... It's really a moment of impasse. It's not a moment of victory. But then by looking at it (by looking and seeing) we can experience a little bit of victory.) In watching her work, we can live a bit of victory because, as viewers put in/inside the work or like what she always says, doing some "heavy lifting". Because that's in fact one of her terms which I adore. This notion that there is "heavy lifting" to be done and who exactly is actually doing that or even willing to do that? She says that people have to do some heavy lifting and to me going to see the work is asking the audience to do some heavy lifting but I also think that what can come afterwards can be a certain lightness and a release of things that we just maybe don't understand are inside of us and are stuck there. And when you talk about "se déposer en terre", c'est tellement beau, ça.

Ivanie:

C'est qu'on a besoin de tous et chacun pour faire ce "heavy lifting". Ce n'est pas à une personne d'arriver avec la force pour le faire. Il peut y avoir des moments où l'on se rencontre (dans un cercle), il peut y avoir des déclencheurs de rage, de colère, de larmes, et à ces moments précis, le cercle doit faire preuve de compassion, d'écoute, d'ouverture. Bref, de force. Ces moments-là se rapprochent d'un sentiment de deuil. Quand tu es en deuil, tu as besoin de soutien autour de toi, pour sentir que tu n'es pas seul.e là-dedans, puis que t'es écouté. Même si tu n'es pas compris.e, au moins tu es écouté. Et là, ça serait ma question pour toi. Est ce que tu vois, à travers les

¹² "For within the ripped hole (fêlure) dug into the mattress with a knife Jassem Hindi makes, is a whole life but also histories, fragments but not a portal passageway. The hole is a one way trip- that is where we are right now. That is where the situation of first nation's population is right now- caught inside a neoliberal pleasure and pain machine – a country making promises while hashing out more blood, and oil."

<https://nelliganmagazine.tumblr.com/post/174507839420/the-impossible-sublime-in-the-murderdance-lara>

multiplés piéces de Lara... Je veux laisser ma question ouverte alors je ne sais pas comment la formuler, mais bon. Je dirais peut-être les constantes. Quelles constantes vois-tu dans le travail de Lara? Quelles évolutions ou transformations vois-tu?

James:

I think one of the constants are definitely some of what I'm starting to call "landscape languages". I believe in all of her works she lays down a landscape. And that's a constant thing that she's still doing in the work. And the landscape for me and again, I hate to use this term again, but I feel the landscape is the "scene of the crime". So yes, there's a landscape or what she calls a "moving canvas"¹³ that's put down. So that's a constant thing. And I think it's a good thing because I see this "landscape" that she lays down filled (strewn) with disparate and seemingly innocuous objects and you know it feels to me like the syllabus of her work, the landscapes/surfaces/tarps with objects being the more general corpus of her work- the basic scaffolding of her practice. And as I wrote in one of my essays about her work¹⁴, what is advancing is what's underneath the landscape (for instance the white tarp and surrounding areas she sets up in *Them Voices*). What is advancing in her work is showing us what is underneath this landscape and thus what is underneath that "scene of the crime". There is the fact that we're starting to realize that this landscape she sets up on stage is not just horizontal, but that there's also something underneath. Lara has started to move more into concerns with the vertical in this work. The odd word used to describe this kind of underneath of our world is "antipodes". "Antipodes" is supposed to be a reflection underneath exactly of what is above, an exact reflection underneath the surface. So from early pieces I've seen, I started to see this thing underneath the floor/surfaces she was dancing on. And I think she's starting to dig more and more. Because you need certain languages, or non-languages, to get access to what's underneath those canvases. And I believe she has been developing certain "landscape languages" - like "deceleration", "stillness", and concern with perspective - the "macro- micro" you have brought up. And to not so much understand them, but to transcend the surface landscape, maybe not transcend, but to be ensconced in them (in the surface landscapes), which means to be filled with them. And then to move on through the languages that are being developed on this surface landscape of the white tarp for instance in "*Them Voices*". So I think she's starting to understand some of the languages that she herself is developing. Because she's basically trying to invent what "contemporary" might mean, for her practice. How does she and that's another thing that she's developing is that she's creating a language of what contemporary performance in general, but contemporary indigenous performance might be. I think she's creating and not just creating but she's definitely birthing and recovering some languages¹⁵ that I think people after her might want to consider as some anchors/vectors of what indigenous or other contemporary performances might and should consider, but also challenging even the idea of what "contemporary" would/ should might mean, do you know what I mean? Because the idea of contemporary the way I use it, contemporary for myself has nothing to do with the general consensus of what that might look like for contemporary art or dance. When I use the word

¹³ Lara's mother was a painter when she was younger and Lara was thus exposed early on to this and other types of visual art her mother was engaged in.

¹⁴ <https://nelliganmagazine.tumblr.com/post/174507839420/the-impossible-sublime-in-the-murderdance-lara>

¹⁵ Lara's work has been a consistent collaboration with her mother Ida Baptiste and her stepfather with Ojibwee Elder Emerson Nanigishki'ing among other consultation with other elders, with her children Ruby and Ocean, her partner Stefan Petersen, and with her literal dance collaborators she has choreographed in previous pieces.

contemporary, I use the word “contemporary” to mean “a rupture” based on one philosopher Alain Badiou who stated “contemporary” to mean/ being “an immanent rupture inside of modernity.” For me I like to think of it as a rupture with the past and with the present. So that's for me what contemporary might mean in the context of my work. So I think she's developing further and further the “rupture” that needs to occur in her practice and therefore in that sense, it's an engagement with the contemporary (with and being a rupture) and or with what the contemporary is not or with what the contemporary is missing. But there's definitely a continual “rupture” that spans her work from past to present. This is obvious in some of the frenetic moments of “*Them Voices*”. That's definitely the thing I see the most in terms of her development. The “rupture” is becoming more and more aggressive, and she's biting her teeth more into it, you know, and I think that will lead towards something which is not tragedy, but I think and I would hope that it's moving more towards this sort of tragic comedy, this trickster. I see the trickster¹⁶ coming out more because that's what we need isn't it? Because ultimately, in all these pieces, actually, if you think about it, from her piece “Native Girl Syndrome” through the other ones and up until “Them Voices”, in all of these I feel they indicate that what we really need is “a translator”. I mean it seems to be a big thing in society with all of the polarizing debates – I ask myself what if we had people who could translate? If there was a person to translate to the Quebec government the deep violence that the Islamic community experiences when they are told that they cannot wear a “hijab”. A translator to explain how stupid the state's decision to tell these women what to wear is.

A translator to explain to the Premier of Quebec what systemic racism is and why his denial is absurd. So if you ask me, what I see Lara doing is that a translator is starting to come out more and more in her work. Edouard Glissant refers to this as the “contemplator”. And that translator is hermetic. She/ he/it (the translator) is a hermetic creature. It's a messenger. You know this old world thing of the messenger between humans and the gods. And you have the trickster which is that “in between” translator¹⁷ / character . So I would hope that “the translator” is becoming more refined in her work. Because we're in desperate need of translators. That's one of my questions, that if we could have people to translate between the groups, could we start things moving better? And at least for us, engaging with her work, we are starting to become somewhat translators ourselves because our job is documentation. So in a sense, we have a bit of a job of translation. Which is interesting, right? I am honoured to collaborate with you as a non indigenous thinker engaging with yourself as an indigenous thinker. I certainly understand what it is to try and also not to try to act as a translator, but there can always be an approach or an attempt at translation when it is done with ethical protocols.. Because that's also the act of writing, critical writing, is it not? So I think definitely there is this trickster character becoming more refined in her work, I would hope. And it's becoming more pronounced such that I would hope at the end, that trickster, that the so-called “translator”/ “messenger” emerges, you know,

¹⁶ “The Trickster, thus straddling oppositions, embodies two antithetical, nonrational experiences of man with the natural world his society and his own psyche: on the one hand, a force of treacherous disorder that outrages and disrupts, and on the other hand, an unanticipated, usually unintentional benevolence in which trickery is at the expense of inimical forces and for the benefit of mankind....The trickster narrative arises in agonistic imagination; a wild venture in communal discourse, an uncertain humor that denies aestheticism, translation, and imposed representations...The tribal trickster is a comic holotrope: the whole figuration; an unbroken interior landscape that beams various points of view in temporal reveries.” Vizenor, G. R. (1988). *The trickster of liberty: Tribal heirs to a wild baronage*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

¹⁷ The trickster at times purposely mis translates the message from sender to receiver thus making the path of the problematic in question more opaque and as some might say more interesting.

does that make sense? Because don't we desperately need translators to speak about cultural appropriation. We need people challenging this notion that one person's freedom of expression on one side should excuse the denigration of a community's sacred productions of knowledge. On the other side you have people saying, cultural appropriation, right. Where's the translator between those people saying "Hey, people, maybe we need to explain to each other what we're really saying. Maybe you don't understand each other. And maybe you never have to understand each other." I am attempting *a translation* of this troubled moment to document this rupture between communities in our society and also to document ruptures that seek to split that very rupture and open a world of critical engagement with the present. Sometimes the translator pretends to be on the other side. That's the "trickster. And I think that character needs to come more and more in performance because we desperately need these sites, platforms, and *personae* who show us nuance. In this time, we definitely need these trickster characters to make a bridge, not necessarily to get us "together". But to make the platform because right now, there's no bridge at all, you know. And setting up an even ephemeral bridge, even if it's just a transparent invisible bridge for a few minutes. But that really is what I think she's doing especially with us making a book/monograph now about her work. She's entering more and more into finding that "figure". Finding "that subject" and that "thing" I won't say "character", but she is entering more and more into finding that *way which can come out as a way of evoking the atmospheres of a certain landscape/ crime /horizon* which is what the translator should do, and this because the translator is not literal. The translator in my mind should be a describer of the atmospheres and not a literal translation. The translator we are speaking of which we see almost emerging in *Them Voices* is a translator who translates the atmospheres and not necessarily the precise "real" historical events. I think Lara starts this space of "translation" of her work and situation (happening) she is presenting early in the process. I think that's what's important and what's going on with our working with Lara as documentors coming in from the beginning of the construction of this "landscape", having worked with her during the process of dramaturgy and early development of the piece.

Ivanie:

Avec la contribution de sa mère et de son beau-père... C'est ça, c'est: Que vois-tu, maman, dans qu'est-ce que je fais? Et c'est quoi ton regard de maman et ton regard de spectatrice? D'amener sa mère aussi dans cette pratique-là d'écriture, c'est de pousser plus loin sa responsabilité. Quand tu es invité.e à contribuer de cette manière-là, tu le fais toujours avec beaucoup de belles intentions, puis avec un désir de formuler ton ressenti, qu'est-ce que t'as vécu, comment tu le traduis dans tes mots, dans ta perspective. Puis c'est drôle, parce que c'est comme si Lara s'engageait dans une pratique d'auto médiation culturelle! (laughing)

James: (laughing)

She tricked all of us into being part of this. She has a whole team of "mediation culturelle".

Ivanie:

On est vraiment les traducteurs, les messagers...

James:

C'est fou. Un jeune homme noir né à Montréal, originaire de Trinidad, qui parle avec sa mère, avec un homme très important dans sa communauté, avec une jeune fille québécoise et autochtone. Mais supposons qu'il s'agisse d'échanges de grande ampleur. Si je devais nommer ce dont nous parlons aujourd'hui, j'utiliserais une expression d'un philosophe où il parle de la "communauté à venir" (Giorgio Agamben). La communauté qui n'est pas encore née, qui est en train de naître.

(It's crazy. A young black man born in Montreal from Trinidad who has the privilege of speaking with Lara's mother and a very important man in her community (Emerson), and with yourself, a new generation of contemporary indigenous art thinkers. And in considering all of these exchanges of great If I had to name what we were talking about today, I would use an expression from a philosopher where he speaks about the "coming community" (Giorgio Agamben). The community that is not yet born, that is coming.)

Ivanie : Ah Ben oui, en fait je sens ça constamment. En fait, c'est que ça grandit. Juste là, on a parlé de *s'expandre*...Je sens qu'en ce moment, je rencontre toutes ces personnes tellement inspirantes qui occupent une place hyper importante. Il me semble qu'elles sont à leur place. Avec toutes ces personnes occupant ces rôles-là, il suffit de se rassembler, et là on peut faire du «*heavy lifting*». Il faut accroître notre conscience que toutes ces personnes-là font un travail de fond.

En fait, j'allais dire que le travail de fond est primordial pour ensuite pouvoir arriver à danser. Parce que ça prend du temps. Une autre chose que je répète souvent ces derniers temps: I need to set my ground before I dance, parce que c'est ça qui se passe aussi dans les rassemblements Powwow. Il y a une grande préparation avant de faire la grande entrée, avant même qu'il y ait une danse... Il y a aussi une danse pour préparer l'espace, pour aplatir l'herbe. Pour moi, je suis en train de ressentir l'émergence de cette philosophie dans ma pratique chorégraphique, et elle se résume à quelques courtes pièces, mais c'est parce que c'est ça dont j'ai besoin de faire, j'ai besoin de set my ground before I dance. Puis pour moi, *set the Ground*, c'est arriver à déposer les gens qui sont éparpillés, qui ne sont pas *focus*, pour se permettre ensemble d'ouvrir nos yeux, nos émotions, les déposer, rassembler les gens qui dansent. Là, il va y avoir du mouvement, du heavy lifting, un grand potentiel de changement. Et aussitôt qu'on est dans un esprit, le changement peut se faire en une fraction de seconde, mais ça prend du temps avant de se rassembler en un esprit.

James:

De là "heavy lifting". Yes the "heavy lifting".

Ivanie:

Oui, puis considérant les multiples crises qui se passent à l'intérieur comme à l'extérieur, on a besoin de focus et on a besoin d'une direction, s'orienter, pour arriver à survivre. En tout cas, là je suis rendue loin (rire).

James:

Je dirais qu'au-delà de survivre, c'est vraiment de trouver un peu d'épanouissement.

Fulfillment. Because to me, the heavy lifting is really it is a bit surviving, but it's also and of course, you know, this, it's not a linear thing, you know, because one of the things which is why

I hesitate to use the word resilience is that, people often like to create this narrative especially with bipoc people, that we started out tragically with all this tragedy, and then we fought against it, and then we were victorious, you know, so it's this, it's a Christian way of thinking. You know that everything happens in threes with this neat Hollywood narrative or like Drake says "started from the bottom and now we're at the top" and we know he never started at the bottom. This narrative is what is often imposed on us- that we started out with this tough life in social housing and being "resilient", we fought against it and now we are victorious. In Christianity it's always about these three- fall, redemption, and then resurrection. This is too simple a narrative. There is a cycle but it is not some neat simple narrative. So, which is really what the "coming community" is about - about understanding that in this cycle of life, and death, and birth and afterlife and other stuff that we don't understand its order or what comes next in the narrative right? And stardust and whatever else in all of that and that there is... where was I going with that? I can't remember. I think I got lost there. I think that there's this... that's the "coming community" - you know that it's not something that's here, it's not something that was there before. I know that there's a famous book by an African author and the title - it's really beautiful - the title in English and in French but in English it's *The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born* (Ayi Kwei Armah). In French, they translated it as "L'âge d'or n'est pas pour demain".

Ivanie:

Je trouve que ça ne m'évoque pas du tout la même chose.

James:

How would you translate it in French?

Ivanie:

Ce n'est peut-être pas poétique, mais, *Celleux remplis de beauté ne sont pas encore nés*.

James

Yeah, that's beautiful. So we translate it and we contact them and we'll tell them.

Ivanie: (rire)

James:

Yes, that is a much more beautiful translation ! Yes, "celleux remplis de beauté ne sont pas encore nés".

Poèmes concernant "Them Voices" par Ivanie-Aubin-Malo

Les fourmis apparaissent géantes Elles savent me miniaturiser. Leurs présences m'obsèdent

Je suis les
i
n
d
ir
e
c
ti
e
v
s.

Bousculer pour réveiller_Déployer

Je traverse les Entrailles,

Les **Failles** de la forme.

S'organiser entre **LES** voix-----Floues---**soudaines**-----**passées**-----**futures**-----

sans les comprendre,

-----je-----leur-----tiens-----la-----main-----

Sous mon manteau,
ELLES me pulsent

Cission.

Frottement strident de métal.

Tourner en boucle.

Répétitions innervées

Cission...

Antipodes magnétiques.

ici _____ sous la terre

du ciment.

Métal de rose
Plastique terreux
Je construis la suite des choses
Dans l'intention
De recherches
Imparfaites

L'Écho

baT |

l e s

imm

E

ubl

E

s

Il transporte les messages

par

deux... ..

(Je ne viens jamais seule)

L a l e n t e u r dévoile le r e l i e f.

P a t i e n t e r e s t l a f i n e s s e

Q u i f o r t i f i e n o s c a p a c i t é
s