



HOMELANDS

Producer: Kaha:wi Dance Theatre
Presenter: Harbourfront Centre – Torque Series
Creator/Director/Designer/Performer: Santee Smith
Performers: Feryn King, Katie Couchie
Composer/Singer/Songwriter: Pura Fé
Composer/Mix/Master: Adrian Dion Harjo
Recorded Singers: Biine Kwe Elijah, Jennifer Kreisberg, Santee Smith
Shane Powless: Projection Design/Editor
Louise Potiki Bryant: Projection Design – selected scenes
Animation: AVA Animation and Visual Arts Inc. / Emma Lopez, Pedro Narvaez
Cinematography: Shane Powless, Katsitsionni Fox, Jaiden Mitchell, Ian Maracle, Ami Kokui
Tamakloe, Santee Smith
Live Performance Costume Designers: Elaine Redding, Santee Smith
Pottery: Steve T. Smith, Santee Smith
Technical Director/Lighting Designer: Sebastian Marziali
Technical Consultant: James Kendal
Production Stage Manager: Senjuti Sarker
Video Performers: Julianne Blackbird, Feryn King, Santee Smith
Video Costume Designers: Bruno Henry, Elaine Redding, Adriana Fulop
Video Tech Support: Thru The Red Door, McMaster University - L.R. Wilson Black Box
Funding Support: Canada Council for the Arts, Ontario Arts Council, Toronto Arts Council

DESCRIPTION

Homelands honours our kinship connection to the natural world, its patterns, energies, and life force. Through multimedia a dreamscape is created of landscape, water, textures and womxn. Three live women dancers embody the elemental, offering, receiving and aligning with the imagery.

Braiding earthy and cinematic media, sound design and performance, Homelands places Yethi'nihstenha / *many womxn* within the homelands and waters of Kahnyen'kehàka *territory* / *enhsenonhstate*' of upper state New York and around Ohswé:ken / *Six Nations of the Grand River*.

Onkwehón:we / *people of the way of forever* maintain and honour our umbilical connection to our lands and water and our kinship connections on A'nowarà:ke / *Turtle Island*. Making joyous, transcendent and powerful embodied alignments to Ka'satsténhsera'kó:wa Sa'oyé:ra / *movement in the direction of the immense creation / nature*, Homelands opens a space to remember as people, we are creation made, we are land and water. In making our connections we question: how do we condole with, yield, listen and move in the way of the forever? Moving through seasons and sites, Homelands also delves in the areas of grief, loss and separation from home and kin. It is a renewal of our connection to earth.

Honouring Ka'nisténhsera' / *Life Givers* umbilical ties to Yethi'nihsténha tsi onhontsá:te / *Mother Earth* past, present, and future, the design and performance represent transformations of Yethi'nihstenha through time eras and portals. Symbolic of the consistency of creation and the resilience and adaptability of the people. Patterning, gestures, and soundings are in



communication with the everlasting cycles of Yethi'nihsténha tsi onhontsá:te / *Mother Earth* and depict the perpetual passage of generations unbroken despite colonial disruption. The narratives circle around supporting orén:na' / *life substance*, the loving responsibility for sustaining the continuance of life.

Creator and artistic director Tekaronhiákhwa Santee Smith gathers an incredible team of collaborators: performers Feryn Karahkwiohstha King and Katie Couchie; composition/score by Pura Fé with Adrian Dion Harjo and vocalists Biine Kwe Elijah and Jennifer Kreisberg. The stunning cinematography features the work of Onkwehón:we filmmakers: Shane Powless, Ian R Maracle, Katsitionni Fox, Jaiden Mitchell along with Ami Kokui Tamakloe. Media designers Louise Potiki Bryant and Shane Powless integrate the imagery in a unique and epic video projection design with animations by AVA Animation and Visual Arts. Layering illumination to the performance space is Lighting Designer and Technical Director Sebastian Marziali. Time period costumes for video and live performance were created by: Elaine Redding, Adriana Fulop, Bruno Henry and Santee Smith. Homelands is supported by a stellar technical team: Stage Manager Senjuti Sarker and technical consultant James Kendal.

The creation was supported by a Harbourfront Centre technical residency and will be presented in the Torque series on April 13-15, 2023. Homelands creation was also supported by Matriarch Uprising Festival February 17, 2023

COLLABORATOR BIOGRAPHIES:

SANTEE SMITH / TEKARONHIÁHKWA – Creator/Director/Performer

Santee is a multidisciplinary artist from the Kahnien'kehàka Nation, Turtle Clan, Six Nations of the Grand River. She trained at Canada's National Ballet School and completed Physical Education and Psychology degrees from McMaster University and a M.A. in Dance from York University. Her debut work *Kaha:wi* - a family creation story premiered in 2004 and one year later she founded Kaha:wi Dance Theatre which has grown into an internationally renowned company based in Six Nations and Tkaronto (Toronto). Santee's artistic work speaks about identity, Indigenous narratives, creative process, and representation. Her body of work includes numerous productions, and she spearheads international Indigenous collaborative projects. She is the recipient of numerous awards and commissions such as guest curator/director of TO Live's animated performance project *Kakwitè:ne nikahá:wi: Call Response to Spring* and the Gardiner Museum's Indigenous Public Art for *Talking Earth, 2022*. Santee is touring her production based on the truths of Canada's first Indian Residential School *The Mush Hole* which received 5 Dora Mavor Moore awards. Santee is a sought-after teacher and speaker on the performing arts and Indigenous performance and culture. She is the 19th Chancellor of McMaster University.

FERYN KARAHKWIOHSTHA KING – Performer (Video and Live)

Feryn is a Kahnien'kehàka artist from Akwesasne, Quebec. Her name in Kaníekeha (Mohawk Language) means 'She makes the moon beautiful' or 'Bright Moon.' A name given to her on the day of the full moon. She is a dance performer, teacher, and free artistic skill of drawing. Even an acrobatic performer in Aerial Lyra of the circus world. At a young age she took interest in learning traditional dancing, and later in life started training in Modern, Contemporary and expression movement. She attended Centennial Colleges Dance Performance program where she had trained in a variety of dances and took in knowledge of the history behind those dances. She is an international dance performer and teaching hoop in both traditional and fusion style, she travels across Canada and into the US. In 2018 to 2022, she was recruited for



a hoop dancing role in Cirque Du Soleil *TOTEM*. Today she continues to share her passion for dance including training in Aerial.

KATIE COUCHIE – Live Performer

Katie is an Oji-Cree dance artist from Nipissing First Nation, now based in Tkaronto. Katie is an honours graduate of the Dance Performance Program at George Brown College. During her time at GBC, Katie had the opportunity to work with many renowned choreographers and teachers such as Susie Burpee, Hanna Kiel, Bengt Jörgen, Anisa Tejpar, and Sharon Moore. Since graduating from college in 2020, Katie has worked with Peggy Baker, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, Red Sky Performance, Alejandro Ronceria, Christine Friday, Hanna Kiel (Human Body Expressions), and Jera Wolfe. Katie has also danced in Toronto Fringe (2021), participated in a digital residency at Banff Centre for the Arts and Creativity led by Christopher House (2021) and recently finished up a residency at Toronto Dance Theatre under Cody Berry. Next, Katie is excited to join Barbra Diabo's production of *Sky Dancers* on their 2023 tour as well as continuing to work with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre in *Homelands*.

PURA FÉ – Composer, Singer

Pura Fé (Tuscarora/Taino) is an Indigenous activist, singer-songwriter, and storyteller known for her distinct, soulful vocals and for breathing life into several musical genres.

Her work as a musician has brought her around the world to do work at festivals, benefits, in classrooms, online, and in the studio. As a Native activist and cultural leader, she has done work to combat the erasure of native culture, restore traditions, build community, fight corporate takeover of native land, and give a voice to those facing social injustice. As the founding member of the internationally renowned Native Women's a cappella trio Ulali, Pura Fé helped to create a movement throughout Indian Country, which not only empowered Native Women's hand drum and harmony, but also built a bridge for Native music into the mainstream music scene. Ulali's unique fusion of ancestral music, cultural roots, and message has left its mark. Currently, Pura Fé lives in Canada and is writing music for First Nations dance and theatre companies while recording a new album.

ADRIAN DION HARJO – Composer, Mix/Master

Adrian is a multi-award winning "Jack of all Trades" when it comes to performing arts. He started singing Powwow style at 7, Fancy Dancing at 10, and then began Hoop Dancing at 12 years of age. His performances have taken him around the world numerous times to share his culture with global audiences. Currently, Adrian now owns his own production company, OvenBakedBeatz LLC where he produces music for TV, Radio and Live Theatre. Adrian stands evenly in both worlds of Traditional Culture and Modern Music with credits including a NAMMY (Native American Music Award), CANAB (Canadian Aboriginal Music Award), Grammy (2001) and and RIAA GOLD Certification. He has created compositions for Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's *TransMigration*, *The Honouring* and *NeolndigenA*.

SHANE POWLESS – Projection Design/Editor, Cinematographer

Shane is from the Mohawk Nation from Six Nations of the Grand River. He works as a videographer/photographer/editor/graphic designer/lighting technician/audio technician. Over the years, Shane has travelled extensively with various dance, theatre productions and musical groups providing the above services. His focus has been working within my Six Nations community, supporting our artists and cultural projects with organizations and artists such as: Woodland Cultural Centre, Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, Thru the Red Door, Six Nations Polytechnic Institute, Six Nations Council, Derek Miller Band, Logan Staats, Rochester Knighthawks, Lacey Hill and more.



LOUISE POTIKI BRYANT – Projection Designer (selected scenes)

Louise Pōtiki Bryant is a Ngāi Tahu choreographer, dancer, and video artist. With her practice Louise aims to honour her whakapapa (genealogy), kaupapa Māori (Māori principles and practices), mana wahine (the intrinsic spiritual power of women), and our relationship with te taiao (environment). She is a founding member and choreographer for Atamira Dance Company and has also choreographed for companies such as The New Zealand Dance Company, Black Grace Dance Company, and Ōrotokare, Art, Story, Motion. Louise also has an independent dance practice with a focus on solo and inter-disciplinary collaborative performance works. Louise designs the staging for her works, and is responsible for the design, production and editing of the projected video elements - an integral part of each performance. Louise's video practice includes directing and editing dance films as well as designing video for arts installations and live performances of opera, contemporary music, and contemporary dance productions. In 2019 Louise was awarded an Arts Foundation Laureate for her choreographic and dance practice.

EMMA LÓPEZ HECHEM – Animation

Emma is an award-winning Creative Director and founding partner of AVA Animation & Visual Arts that specializes in Projection Design. She is a member of the First Cohort of the #FifthWave Initiative by the Canadian Film Centre for women led businesses and has been creating graphics and animation for renowned animation and post-production studios in Canada and abroad for over a decade. AVA Animation and Visual Arts is a pioneer in the international field of Architectural Projection Mapping for live events. They create award-winning works and installations showcased in Mexico, Japan, Switzerland, Spain, United States, U.A.E., Lebanon, Armenia, Romania, Chile, Russia and Canada.

PEDRO NARVAEZ CASTELLANOS – Animation

Pedro is the award-winning Technical Director and Partner behind AVA Animation & Visual Arts. His background is Information Design with a postgraduate certificate in Visual Effects at Seneca College of Applied Arts and Technology. Pedro has over 14 years of experience working in animation and post-production, collaborating studios in Canada and abroad. Together with his partner Emma Lopez Hechem started AVA Animation and Visual Arts in 2010, pioneering the field of Architectural Projection Mapping for live events. Ever since they have created award winning works and installations for Mexico, Japan, Switzerland, Spain, United States, U.A.E., Lebanon, Armenia, Romania, Chile, Russia and Canada.

JENNIFER KRIESBERG – Singer/Songwriter

Jennifer (Tuscarora, North Carolina) comes from four generations of Seven Singing Sisters through the maternal line. She is known for fierce vocals, soaring range and lilting, breath-taking harmonies. She has been singing since she was a child. When she was seventeen, she joined the critically acclaimed Native women's Trio ULALI. Her voice perfectly wove the high strand of Ulali's renowned harmony with incomparable skill and grace for over twenty years. Jennifer is frequently called upon to guest lecture and conduct vocal workshops at universities, schools, in Native communities and at festivals throughout the United States and Canada. She has worked in film and television and has toured with renowned musicians throughout the world.

ELAINE REDDING – Costume Design

Elaine formally started her design career after successfully graduating from Sheridan College, Fashion Technique and Design in June 1997. This career path has taken her to Stratford and Shaw Festival theatres working on period costumes as well as numerous independent commissions. Her collaborations with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre began in 2007 including



costumes for the award winning film, *Kaha:wi, Cycle of Life* and productions, *The Honoring* a historical production of the War of 1812, *TransMigration* designs were inspired by Anishnaabe artist Norval Morrisseau and *The Creator's Game* inspired by the game of Lacrosse. Elaine has also re-designed and added to Kaha:wi Dance Theatre's productions *Susuriwka – Willow Bridge, Medicine Bear* and *Kaha:wi*.

SEBASTIAN MARZIALI – Technical Director/Lighting Designer

Sebastian Marziali (they/them) is a Uruguayan-Canadian performer, designer, and creator based in T'karonto (Toronto). A desire to continually evolve and widen the breadth of their practice has seen Sebastian work with and learn from master's from across the Americas such as Grupo Yuyachkani, La Pocha Nostra, and Teatro La Candelaria to name a few. Since 2020 they have used their knowledge as a designer and technician to help create and adapt live performance events to digital platforms, building new creative methodologies. Sebastian was the Lighting Designer for the 2018 & '19 Toronto International Burlesque Festivals, 2019 Vanguardia Dance Festival, The 2022 Mush Hole tour for Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, and Venue Designer for the 2022 RUTAS festival. Sebastian also specialises in projection design and implementation using Isadora. They starred in, designed, and choreographed for Sold-out T.O. Fringe hits *Lysistrata, Carmilla, and Mayhem* at Miskatonik.

SENJUTI SARKER – Production Stage Manager

Senjuti (she/her) is a Bangali-Canadian, Tkaronto based multidisciplinary artist, designer, manager and a librarian. When she's not working to bring productions and creative visions to fruition, she's living her socialist fantasy in the very fantastic simulation game, *The Sims 4*. Some of her previous involvements include working with Kaha:wi Dance Theatre, Other HeArts, The AMY Project, The RISER Project and INDUSTRY and Canadian Association of Fringe Festivals (CAFF).

JAMES KENDAL – Technical Consultant

James Kendal is a technician, carpenter and artist based in Toronto. His career in performance began as a youngster with training in music and many years as a classical ballet dancer. James's career has shifted to stage technical and carpentry work following his years doing fine carpentry and home building. James has worked on many acclaimed productions - including touring internationally. Following his fast-paced years touring the world, James has taken on the role of Senior Performance Technician at McMaster University, where he currently spends most of his days. James is always delighted to work with Santee Smith and is so excited for this run of *Homelands*.