



Expanding the
possibilities
of performance

**SummerWorks announces 2021 Festival Programming –
prioritizing artistic inquiry, making process public, + exploring digital frontiers**

**Public showings of Lab Residencies presented in association with the Stratford
Festival Lab & new Artists at Work program
animate digital platforms + physical storefronts + and other public spaces**

**Festival bookended by Presentations of Alison Wong's *nowhen* as part of Canadian Stage's
Dream in High Park; and a triptych of dance films from School of Toronto Dance Theatre
Winchester Prize winning artists; public facing activity every day in August**

ALL PROGRAMMING WILL AGAIN BE FREE WITH VARIOUS ACCESSIBILITY OFFERINGS

Toronto, ON – With great enthusiasm and optimism about the possibilities of a post-pandemic future, **SummerWorks** is pleased to today announce the 2021 Festival programming line-up, again re-imagining what a Festival can be in response to a year of disruption and prioritizing the needs of artists and audiences.

SummerWorks Festival 2021 will get underway on **August 1** and present **free public-facing activity on multiple platforms all month long**. Every day will offer a way of encountering artists and their work either in person or through digital formats. With a focus on supporting investigation into future *possibilities for performance*, this year's Festival foregrounds **SummerWorks Lab Residencies presented in association with the Stratford Festival Lab**, supporting 2-4 projects in residency each week. Through the month, public sharings of projects in residency will be scheduled. Four residency projects are presented in partnership with leading immersive theatre company **Outside the March's TD Forward March Program as *The Pop-Up Experience***, which will see **one residency project weekly** popping up in a **corner storefront laboratory** on Bloor West, as well as at the **Wildseed Centre for Activism and Art**. Passers-by throughout the month will often be able to watch and listen in on the work-in-progress in real time, and even engage with and impact the creative process. Many of the Pop-Up Residencies will also feature live-streamed presentations of the work. Lab sharings will be scheduled as the Festival gets underway; audiences can keep track of newly scheduled public events on SummerWorks socials and website.

“With summer upon us again, it is remarkable to reflect on the impacts of the pandemic as we felt them a year ago – 5 months in – to where we are now after almost a year and a half of social disruption,” says SummerWorks Artistic and Managing Director Laura Nanni. “Coming into 2021 it was clear that artists needed space and time – to process, to create, to interrogate – in the absence of the pressure to ‘complete.’ The pandemic has given us reason to resist conventional ways of working, modes of production, and pace. There is an opportunity to come back to things while centering care and that’s what we’re trying to do.”

“With that in mind, our focus on work in development and artistic residency is driven by a desire to invest in the future, to begin to plant seeds and nurture forward-thinking artistic exploration as we begin the process of rebuilding the performance community. And in the ongoing interest of exploring our understanding of and relationship to public, SummerWorks is opening a window this year onto process.

Nanni continues, *“Recurring themes within the programming speak clearly to pandemic impacts. Collaboration over distance, renegotiating our relationship to time, renegotiation of intimacy, interrogation of capitalist and colonial systems, and Indigenous, Queer and BIPOC visions for the future. These themes are being explored this year in a more liminal performance space and time.”*

Artists in Residency in 2021 include, **Erin Ball & Vanessa Furlong** (ON & NS); **Nate Britton & Devon Healy** (ON); **Tom Arthur Davis & Jiv Parasram** (ON & BC); **Rodney Diverlus & Syrus Marcus Ware** (ON); **Todd Houseman** (AB); **Jordan Laffrenier** (ON); **Philip Nozuka** (ON); **Me Time** (ON); **Freya Olafson** (MB); **Dainty Smith & Ravyn Wngz** (ON) and **Switch Collective** (ON). For the first time, SummerWorks Artistic and Managing Director **Laura Nanni**, along with long-time UK-based collaborator **Sorrel Muggridge**, join the aforementioned artists in residency to make experiments of their own.

Bookended by two **Presentations**, SummerWorks 2021 begins with the previously announced **nowhen**, created by SummerWorks 2020 Associate **Alison Wong** and presented in partnership with Canadian Stage in collaboration with York University, as part of *Dream in High Park*. A two-part auditory and nature-based experience in the park featuring current Theatre at York Students, **nowhen** invites guests to, and “let go of *time*, and revel in *place*.” Part One sends participants on an audio-guided journey through the park environment, converging the audience in the amphitheatre for a live performance. The Festival concludes with a virtual screening of a **trilogy of new dance films** choreographed by Toronto Dance Theatre’s Winchester Prize-winning emerging artists, **Charlotte Cain, Michael Rayson**, and **Kurumi Yoshimoto**, and featuring School of Toronto Dance Theatre students from around the globe.

In keeping with SummerWorks’ mandate to bring artists and audiences together to experience public space in new ways, SummerWorks introduces a new program this year –**Artists at Work**– under the banner of the **Public Works** stream. Artistic investigations continue as fifteen **artists and groups from across the country** share aspects of their creative process and discuss urgent ideas borne of the moment, in regular **takeovers of the SummerWorks social media and online platforms**. Artists and groups participating include **ArtSpin** (ON); **Michael Caldwell** (ON); **Justine Chambers** (BC); **Darla Contois** (MB); **Hey, Girls: Jill Connell, Georgina Beaty, Ame Henderson** (ON); **Yousef Kadoura** (ON); **Liz Peterson & Fan Wu** (US & ON); **Gloria Mok** (YK); **Mark Reinhart** (ON); **Lauren Runions** (ON); **Gloria Swain** (ON) and **Tiny Bear Jaws** (AB). SummerWorks staff and members of the Artistic Advisory will also be sharing behind the scenes throughout the month.

“Throughout the pandemic, despite the absence of traditional opportunities to present work, artists have been continuing to investigate, experiment, and process the world unfolding around them, often in their private spaces. Artists At Work aims to unveil some of this ongoing work within public platforms.” comments **Nanni**. *“This also allows us to consider more intentionally, what the artistic possibilities are within these spaces. Social media and other digital platforms are now a major locus of our social and political dialogues – they are an extension of the public square.”*

In keeping with examination of digital as performance intermediary and archival medium, for the first time this year, SummerWorks will engage **four filmmakers to experiment with digital formats and document select performance projects**. With an aim to help disseminate projects beyond their time at SummerWorks and create content for hybrid performances, the filmmaking team will be available for consultation to all SummerWorks artists participating this year.

Launched last year to augment the declining performance criticism environment in Canada and to support the development of Indigenous, Black and racialized voices, the **Performance Criticism Program** will return in 2021. This year the project will invite four IBPOC artists with professional interest in critical writing to be mentored by seasoned culture writers with expertise in performance criticism. Each writer will be supported in the production of an original piece of performance criticism, responding to work in the SummerWorks Festival programming and to be published on SummerWorks’ digital platforms.

As usual, **SummerWorks Exchange** activities will happen behind the scenes from July to October, including facilitated workshops, meetings and pitch sessions, connecting SummerWorks artists with curators and presenters from around the world. Partners for the Exchange include [OFFTA](#) (Montreal), [Why Not Theatre's This Gen Fellowship Program](#), [Generator](#) (Toronto) and [Fascinators Management](#) (Vancouver).

In 2021, SummerWorks continues to prioritize accessibility for artists and audiences. All programming will be free and continue to offer various accessibility options including captioning, ASL interpretation and audio description.

The SummerWorks 2021 Artistic Advisory includes **Cara Eastcott, Eroca Nicols, Asad Raza, and Luke Reece**, who are working with SummerWorks Artistic and Managing Director Laura Nanni as mentors and outside eyes to SummerWorks Lab participants this year.

SummerWorks programming is kindly supported by **Canadian Heritage, Canada Council, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, Lindy Green Charitable Family Foundation, Aubrey Marla Dan Foundation and TD Bank Group**.

DOWNLOAD COMPLETE PROGRAMMING DESCRIPTIONS [HERE](#).

For more information visit www.summerworks.ca

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About SummerWorks:

MISSION SummerWorks expands the possibilities of performance.

VISION SummerWorks is a leader, collaborator and community builder at the forefront of contemporary performance – asking crucial questions; nurturing artistic innovation; and presenting new works that reflect the complexity and diversity of our society.

MANDATE

- We collaborate with emerging and established artists and curators to explore new directions, experiment in form, and develop their professional capacities.
- We curate, produce, and present programming that provokes, excites, and engages the public.
- We cultivate and contribute to progressive practices that foster greater diversity, accessibility, equity, and sustainability across our sector.
- We create networks and engage in creative exchange locally, nationally, and internationally.

VALUES

- *Creative Risk and Curiosity.* We engage with artists, audiences, partners, and staff who are inquisitive, willing to experiment, and be adventurous. We encourage bold ideas, new directions, and big questions, cultivating space for exploration and innovation.
- *Care and Collaboration.* We carefully consider all the choices we make, understanding that the works we curate, the time we give, who we work with, and spaces we use, impact the experiences people have. We prioritize connection and dialogue, as well as community and relationship building. By working with artists and partners to exchange ideas and resources we're able to multiply our impact.
- *Diversity and Difference.* We celebrate diversity in the arts and people, prioritizing inclusive and accessible processes and experiences. We look to introduce professional artists and audiences from diverse communities to each other and to be inspired by our similarities and differences.

WHAT WE DO

SummerWorks curates, produces, and presents artistic activities year-round that culminate in the SummerWorks Performance Festival every August. Our current activities include:

- *Presentations* - fully-developed new works, offering a snapshot of contemporary performance;
- *The Lab* - a place for exploration, experimentation and process where new work is incubated or shared at crucial stages of development;
- *The Exchange* - encapsulating professional development and industry activities including workshops, conversations, mentorship and pitching opportunities; and,
- *Public Works* – free performances, bringing artists and audiences together to experience public space in new ways.