

Summerworks presents

Too Dirty to Clean



Photo by Alexandra Stiller-Moldovan

Too Dirty To Clean (TDTC) is part of **SummerWorks**, an 11-day festival of bold creative expressions from a diversity of perspectives and lived experiences, that engage with the idea of *survival*, in both subtle and blunt ways, with nuanced complexity. With over 40+ events and activities, all curated and designed around the idea of gathering together in public space, this year's Festival offers you a moment to witness dynamic live performances by independent artists from across Canada, and around the world.

TDTC is also part of **SummerWorks Lab** programming – a place for exploration, experimentation, and process, with diverse performance works shared at crucial stages of creative development, forging connections between artists and audiences.

Content and Environment warnings

- The piece contains representations of addiction and overdose.
 - The piece contains queer-/trans-phobic language.
 - There is a radio which switches songs abruptly, which sometimes makes a loud, crackling static sound, and which sometimes plays a loud haranguing lecture by an adult male voice.
 - There is a vacuum which the performer turns on and off suddenly, and which makes a loud noise when turned on.
 - The space contains baking soda and confetti litter, small amounts of which may blow into the audience
 - The performer will occasionally interact with the audience, but active audience participation is not required.
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Context

Too Dirty to Clean is a filth-obsessed satire of the messy logic of purity and cleanliness. Performed using cleaning and disciplinary tools, a beleaguered cleaner tries to restore order to a room as the mess and the implements takes on a life of their own. Cleanliness takes on a brand-new shiny veneer of filth and fun that playfully shadows and critiques our narratives of addiction while revealing the complex experience of ongoing recovery.

Puppeteer/performer brawk hessel has utilized their lived experience as a house cleaner and a recovering addict – who is now “clean” and sober – to create this twisted, antic-filled examination of the ever-incomplete process of cleaning up our act. Combining elements of object theatre, installation, clown and performance art, the audience is invited into the age-old question, “Who made this big mess?”

brawk would love your feedback on this lab. If you have time, please fill out this [questionnaire](#).

Credits

Ann Powell (she/her): prop design consultant and mentor



Ann Powell is co-artistic director of Puppetmongers Theatre, where she has been playing with puppets and creating critically acclaimed new works since establishing the company with her brother David in 1974, and touring with them around the world. Outside of Puppetmongers, Ann collaborates on projects with other theatre companies and artists, including an Arts for Peace theatre project in the former USSR with Whole Loaf Theatre. She teaches puppetry arts to adults at colleges, conferences and Puppetmongers' School of Puppetry, and to children as an Artist in Education. Ann has also illustrated a number of books for children and written one, and was a founding member of Kids Can Press publishing company.

brawk hessel (they/them): performer and creator



brawk hessel is a white settler and a gender nonconforming fag that uses they/them pronouns. Brawk is also a recovering addict, proudly mad, and a careworker. Their work has been featured frequently at Video Fag, Buddies in Bad Times Theatre and Glad Day Bookshop. They are also a collective member of the community arts space, Unit 2, as well as the Bricks and Glitter Festival.

Brigitte Head (she/her): active listener



Originally from South Africa, **Brigitte Head** is a Black feminist community organizer and mother of 3. For 30 years, she's worked as counselor at Opportunity For Advancement, an organization that supports women as they gain self confidence and move towards financial independence.

Harri Thomas (they/them): director & dramaturg

HARRI THOMAS (they/them) is a Nonbinary, multi-disciplinary artist working in theatre as a director and dramaturg and performance maker. Their work is driven by a curiosity around the possibilities of hybrid performance forms, and is especially devoted to marginalized histories, the inventive use of bodies and objects, and the performance of memory. They are a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada's Directing program. Selected Credits: Director *Lot and His God* (Desiderata Theatre Co, 2015), Director/Dramaturg *Mad Ones* (Tangled Art + Disability 2018), Director/Dramaturg *Slaughter Bros Dime Circus* (baby monster productions, 2020/22), Director/Performer *Invisible Artists Carnival* (Other Hearts/Eyelevel Gallery, Nocturne 2023), Director *Quartet* (Other Hearts in association w Video Cabaret, 2024), Director/Dramaturg *Belladonna* (development workshop, FAWN Chamber Creative, 2024).

Nathaniel Hanula James (they/he): dramaturg



Nathaniel Hanula-James (he/they) is a theatremaker who collaborates on new work as a dramaturg, playwright, administrator, and performer. Nathaniel facilitates the Local Young Playwrights Unit at Tarragon Theatre, offers freelance dramaturgical support to artists across Ontario, and worked alongside Brian Quirt and Gloria Mok at the dramaturgical company Nightswimming for three years. In his writing practice, Nathaniel dedicates himself to crafting unabashedly queer worlds in which humour, cynicism, and wonder exist in constant conversation. In his object theatre piece, *UNTITLED FLAMINGO PLAY* (Talk is Free Theatre 2022, OutFest Halifax 2023, Incoming Festival 2024), a stuffed flamingo dispenses questionable advice to two queer children in search of their authentic selves. Nathaniel's play *A CLOUD OF INK IN THE SHAPE OF HERSELF*, commissioned by ZeeZee Theatre's National Queer and Trans Playwriting Unit, follows an archivist who descends to the Underworld in search of three Black queer historical figures who consume her research and her imagination. They are a staff writer at *Intermission Magazine* and are working with Dr. Karen Fricker to develop a new open-access course in *Equitable Theatre Criticism*. Nathaniel is a graduate of the National Theatre School of Canada's acting program, Humber College's Arts Administration Program, and McGill University (BA Drama & Theatre).

Nic “murr” Murray (he/him): sound design



Born in Barbados, **Nicholas Murray** is a Composer/Producer/ Sound Artist.

Selected Theatre and Dance

- Toronto Dance Theatre - The Magic Of Assembly. - 2023
- Toronto Biennial of Art/Syrus Marcus Ware - MBL:Freedom - 2022
- Art Gallery of Mississauga - Pulse - 2022
- ECT Collective/Theatre Centre - Here Are the Fragments - 2019
- Aga Khan Museum/Generous Friend - Noor - 2018
- Luminato Festival/Theatre Centre - Out The Window. - 2018
- Nuit Blanche - Toronto Through Sound - 2017
- The National Arts Centre - Republic of Inclusion - 2017
- Theatre Why Not/Soulpepper - Gimme Shelter - 2016
- Young People’s Theatre - Emily’s Piano - 2015
- Subtle Vigilance Collective - The Besetting of Reena Virk - 2012
- MDR/ Paz Festival - Best Sex I’ve Ever Had - 2011
- Mammalian Diving Reflex - Monster Makers – - 2011
- Know Theatre - Pu-erh - 2010
- Dancemakers - Double Bill - 2010
- Birdland Theatre - Last Days of Judas Iscariot - 2008/09
- Canadian Stage - Midsummer Nights Dream - 2008/09
- Mammalian Diving Reflex - A Suicide-Site Guide to the City - 2004
- Mammalian Diving Reflex - pppeeeaaacccee - 2003

Robin Leveroos (she/her): design and puppet manipulation consultant



Robin Leveroos (she/her, b. 1986) is an interdisciplinary artist, designer, and insatiable tinkerer. Her practice focuses on queer use of objects, experimental animation, and playfully questioning how we see and experience the material world around us. In addition to producing Macromatter works, she also collaborates with other artists and companies as a performer and scenographer.

Some presentation highlights include: Schaubude, Berlin, Festival de Casteliers, Montreal, PuSh International Performing Arts Festival, Vancouver, Macau Puppet and Object Theatre Festival, Macau, Prague Quadrennial of Performance Design, Prague, World Stage Design ScenoFest, Taipei, Walker Art Center, Minneapolis.

Originally from Minneapolis, MN, Robin immigrated to Canada in 2005. She graduated from The National Theatre School of Canada in Montreal and holds an MFA in Performance and Design from Simon Fraser University. Now residing in Berlin, some passions include reading, cycling, farming, sewing, jewelry design, and rave dancing

If you would like to learn more about the themes and content of *Too Dirty to Clean*, here is a resource list for further exploration.

- [How to use a naloxone kit.](#)
- [Pieces to Pathways-a substance use support program](#) for 2SLGBTQ youth
- [List of LGBTQ Narcotics Anonymous meetings](#)
- [List of LGBTQ Alcoholics Anonymous meetings](#)
- [List of Secular/Athiest/Agnostic Alcoholics Anonymous meetings](#)
- [Harm Reduction Supplies and Counselling in Toronto/ The Works](#)
- [**Indigenous Harm Reduction's Page with a Donate button**](#)