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PROGRESS
an international festival of performance and ideas
returns for fifth edition

Fifth edition of Progress welcomes new curators and showcases work from Belgium, Canada, Italy, the United Kingdom, and the United States

January 30 – February 15, 2020

TORONTO, ON – SummerWorks and The Theatre Centre, are thrilled to announce the fifth edition of **PROGRESS, an international festival of performance and ideas**. The Festival brings together a dynamic group of curatorial companies and progressive performance work from across the globe that is urgent and reflective of contemporary approaches to form.

PROGRESS is distinguished by its collectively curated program, which brings together a new assembly of curatorial organizations each year to create a Festival that reflects the complexity and diversity of contemporary society. In 2020, Progress welcomes new curators **Broadleaf Theatre, DopoLavoro Teatrale**, and **RT Collective**, joining returning curators **FADO Performance Art Centre, SummerWorks Performance Festival, The Theatre Centre**, and **Why Not Theatre**. The Festival takes over The Theatre Centre's varied performance spaces **January 30th – February 15th, 2020**.

*"We are extremely excited to be celebrating our fifth milestone for Progress this year," says **SummerWorks Performance Festival Artistic and Managing Director Laura Nanni**. "With each edition of the Festival, we have continued to see the value of showcasing innovative international work alongside the work of Canadian artists working at the edge of performance practice – it is critical in advancing the community locally."*

*"There is a cross-pollination of vital discussions and ideas about what performance can be that happens in bringing artists together from around the globe," says **Theatre Centre General and Artistic Director Aislinn Rose**. "It is very rewarding to see **Progress** finding its place and becoming a pillar within a global network of contemporary performance."*

The curation of **Progress 2020** is rooted in interrogations of class structure, economic collapse, and climate crisis – dovetailing into explorations of inheritance, and how we might navigate what we have been handed.

PROGRESS kicks off on January 30th with the return of the internationally acclaimed interdisciplinary company **bluemouth inc.** and the North American premiere of **Café Sarajevo**, an immersive theatrical experience framed as a podcast. Following protagonist Lucy Simic as she travels to her father's birthplace of Bosnia, *Café Sarajevo* incorporates dance, games, music, and 360 video into a fast-paced, intimate, and thoughtful exploration of nationalism, racial bias, and war tourism. SummerWorks presents an expanded version of this show which first held a workshop as part of the 2018 SummerWorks Lab, where it received an honourable mention for the Buddies in Bad Times Vanguard Award for Risk and Innovation. Also this week, interdisciplinary artist **Hazel Meyer** explores literal and figurative inheritance in ***The Marble in the Basement***, untangling power, memory, and inheritance by anthropomorphizing the actual inheritance of a pile of marble scraps from Canadian artist and experimental filmmaker Joyce Wieland.

The second week of the Festival kicks off with **Screen:Moves**, a one-night only screening of commissioned dance films, curated and presented by **RT Collective**. The Theatre Centre presents a journey through twenty years of South Korean history as told by a group of talking rice cookers, in ***Cuckoo***. An economic disaster and its ripple effects are conveyed in an onstage performance by Belgium-based South Korean artist **Jaha Koo** and his rice cooking companions. Re-programmed to speak, the devices serve as a token of Jaha's alienation, and metaphor for the most absurd and comical aspects of the recent past. Curated by Broadleaf Theatre, ***This World Made Itself*** and ***Infinitely Yours*** form a pairing of multimedia works that combine projected animation, live performance, and shadow silhouette that journey through the history of the earth and meditate on climate catastrophe. Created and performed by **Miwa Matreyek**, this is an enchanting, dream-like double-bill that marries animation, video, and the human body. And from Italy, **DopoLavoro Teatrale** brings ***Affioramenti (Surfacing)*** from visual artist **Antonella Bersani**, an immersive experience for six participants at a time that invites audience members to offer personal objects and provocations into an ever-evolving installation that incorporates personal histories, memories, and testimonies.

"I am extremely excited to bring bluemouth inc. with Café Sarajevo to Progress this year, which they first explored as part of the SummerWorks Lab in 2018," SummerWorks Performance Festival Artistic and Managing Director Laura Nanni. "I first became acquainted with bluemouth's work 20 years ago, and they were one of my earliest introductions to interdisciplinary, immersive work in Toronto - not to mention that they really paved the way for creators like DopoLavoro Teatrale (DLT), Outside the March, and others. To me they are a foundational company in this realm of performance practice. Café Sarajevo introduces a thread of work in the Festival that includes DLT's presentation of Affioramenti (Surfacing) from Italian artist Antonella Bersani, Hazel Meyers' Marble in the Basement curated by FADO, and Broadleaf Theatre's selections This World Made Itself and Infinitely Yours by Miwa Matreyek. All these companies and artists are pushing at the edges of form in intriguing ways."

In the final week of the Festival, The Theatre Centre presents the award-winning and controversial UK artist **Scottee** in ***Class*** and ***Working Class Dinner Party***. A one-man show and act of confrontation, in *Class*, Scottee uncovers what it is to grow up poor and to be embarrassed about where you're from,

while bluntly damning the attitude of a singular working-class experience as spectacle. While *Class* is made for the middle-class, *Working Class Dinner Party* invites the working class to the table. Scottee and local Toronto artists invite you to join them for a chat around the dinner table as they unpack class identity, and why learning how to be posh in an art world gets you places. In the participatory workshop ***How I Learned to Serve Tea*** (curated by Why Not Theatre in association with Koffler Centre of the Arts), artist-facilitator **Shaista Latif** assesses the language of invitation and hosting, and explores the dynamics of power through acts of hospitality. The artist asks, “if we lived in a decolonized world what would we be making? Who would we be serving?” This work recognizes that there is an economy for everything: a cost, a transaction. Class, race, identity, and belonging influence our capacities to give and to receive. Participants are invited to confront and reflect on who gets to have a seat at the table.

“Artists like Shaista have been asking those of us in positions of privilege to engage more critically with our approaches to equity,” says **Theatre Centre General and Artistic Director Aislinn Rose**. “Shaista specifically talks about the paradoxes of inclusion politics, and my goal is to offer institutional support to artists who are using different forms and styles to address this and intersecting issues. Meanwhile, those of us with curatorial agency need to make sure the opportunities we’re offering artists do not become extensions of oppression. The multi-curatorial model of Progress may be the perfect place to interrogate these ideas.

“In particular, I have been wanting to throw support behind artists working on the issue of class for some time. Scottee’s work – *Class*, and *Working Class Dinner Party* – offers an explosive look at class and privilege, which I hope will highlight our Toronto artists who have been working to raise this as a major conversation in recent years. I’m particularly excited about the opportunities for these artists to gather and to share their experiences with one another beyond the confines of the Festival, and for those of us in curatorial roles to be engaging more deeply with artists to work towards greater socio-economic diversity in our artistic support and programming.”

Closing the third week of the Festival, from the west coast of Canada, comes ***Certified*** by comedian and certified insane person **Jan Derbyshire**. Curated by **Why Not Theatre**, Jan Derbyshire’s *Certified* is by turns hilarious and heart-breaking. Derbyshire shares her experience of being certified a total of eight times, and how she got to where she is today. The audience becomes a mental health review board, grappling with questions like how we define “crazy” -- and who gets to decide.

Progress performances are enhanced by post-show discussions and community meals on February 5th, and 12th. **Coach House Books** collaborates with Progress on February 5th to present a book launch of **Amanda Leduc’s *Disfigured: On Fairy Tales, Disability, and Making Space***. The Festival will be bookended by an Opening Night reception following the performances on January 30th, and a **Closing Night Party** on February 15th. Additional ancillary programming will be announced in the new year.

Tickets for Progress (single and 3 show passes) are now on sale and available at www.progressfestival.org or by calling The Theatre Centre box office at 416-538-0988.

Several presentations also offer offer Pay-What-You-Can Afford pricing. For more information about Access Tickets and other accessibility initiatives, please visit <http://progressfestival.org/accessibility>

For curatorial notes, images & press inquiries please contact:

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Progress 2020 lineup

The Marble in the Basement

Canada

Jan 30 - Feb 1

Conceived and Performed by Hazel Meyer

Curated and presented by FADO Performance Art Centre

"In 2016, I was gifted a ton of Joyce Wieland's marble scraps. A few pieces of it are here with us today."

What gets stored in a shoebox? Deposited into an archive? Shoved into a corner? Catalogued as important? Fever pitched towards a garbage can? Literally and figuratively centered on a pile of marble scraps that once belonged to Joyce Wieland, Meyer's *The Marble in the Basement* untangles issues of power, memory and inheritance by anthropomorphizing a forgotten object from this influential Canadian artist's domestic archive.

Surrounded by Meyer's chosen family of objects which include a moveable staircase, an insulated football cape, a hooked rug and a hole the size of the tip of a ballpoint pen, Wieland's marble is the anchor and next of kin, orchestrating the choreography that unfolds.

The Marble in the Basement is a part of *The Weight of Inheritance*, Meyer's multi-year research project funded by the Canada Council for the Arts, that looks to the legacy of Canadian artist and experimental filmmaker Joyce Wieland to work across questions of inheritance. Asking how a notable and supported figure like Wieland, can direct us to lesser-supported histories of art, land, representation and care.

"With a mixture of tenderness, fannish enthusiasm and a keen sense for the absurdities that shape which histories are told, Meyer's performance invites us to help bear the weight of feminist lives lived and lost."

~Gabrielle Moser

Café Sarajevo

Canada / USA

Jan 30 - Feb 2

Created and Performed by bluemouth inc.

An immersive theatrical experience exploring the borders that divide and unite us, within the framework of a live podcast.

Café Sarajevo follows protagonist, Lucy Simic, as she travels to her father's birthplace, Bosnia. Along the way, we explore divided cities and the notion of "human nature", asking the question: what causes a nation to divide, and begin to hate the very people and culture that it used to see at its own?

With story, dance, game, music 360° video, and by casting the audience as characters in the story, internationally acclaimed performance makers bluemouth inc. create a fast-paced, intimate, and thoughtful exploration about nationalism, racial bias and war tourism.

An excerpt of *Café Sarajevo* was shared with sold-out houses as part of the 2018 SummerWorks Lab, where it received honourable mention for the Buddies in Bad Times Vanguard Award for Risk and Innovation. SummerWorks is thrilled to now present the North American premiere of the fully realized work for Toronto audiences.

"The richest, fullest theatre experience I've ever had."

– Martin Denton, NYTheatre.com on *Dance Marathon* by bluemouth inc.

"Immersing myself in the fascinating full-evening experience of It Comes in Waves, I realize just how much I've missed bluemouth inc. Nobody comes close to doing what they do."

– Glenn Sumi, NOW Magazine on *It Comes in Waves* by bluemouth inc.

Screen:Moves

Canada

Feb 3

Commissioned dance films by various artists

Curated and presented by RT Collective

Screen:Moves is a program of original short dance film and video created by artists from Canada and around the world, featuring narrative, experimental, comedic, and animated works from a diverse range of dance styles and traditions.

This year's edition is co-curated by Christophe Dupuis, Amelia Ehrhardt, Aria Evans, and Nikola Steer. Featuring works by: Christopher Duarte, Corynne Bisson, Michael Martini & Justin de Luna, Lauren Runions, Cody Berry, Unidentified Human, Patricia Allison, Hannah Bild-Enkin, Miha Matevzic, Linnea Swan & Susie Burpee, Christina Kozak, Danielle Long & Alder Sherwood, Kristen-Innes Stambolic & Devon Snell, Vicki Sue Machin, bluemouth inc., Magdalena Hutter, Kendra Epik, Robert Kingsbury, the Kusanagi Sisters, Katherine Piro, and others.

Affioramenti (Surfacing)

Italy

Feb 5 - 9

Created by Antonella Bersani

With the collaboration of Matteo Pennese

Curated by DopoLavoro Teatrale

Presented by DopoLavoro Teatrale and Istituto Italiano di Cultura

Acclaimed visual artist Antonella Bersani builds an immersive environment with the help of the audience.

The *Affioramenti* experience is designed for 6 participants at a time, who have one-on-one moments of creation and interaction with each other. The space contains objects that appear to have emerged from the sea at low tide — a story to be completed.

Each participant is invited to bring an object of significance to their life and place it within the space. They will then offer to the room both their object and a vocal expression related to the object they place. The expression can be a story, a whisper, a song, or just a breath.

Participants will be prompted to actively listen to the other participants, while maintaining an atmospheric sound dynamic that is as quiet (*pianissimo*) as possible.

Thus, a choir will be created. The audience will hear the sounds, sometimes disjointed and sometimes not, emerging from a “world of ghosted objects”.

This World Made Itself & Infinitely Yours

USA

Feb 6-7

Created and performed by Miwa Matreyek

Curated and presented by Broadleaf Theatre

This World Made Itself is a multimedia live performance work combining projected animation and the artist’s own shadow silhouette, as she interacts with the fantastical world of the video, merging film and theater to create a unique spectacle. *This World Made Itself* is a visually and musically rich journey through the history of the earth, from the universe’s epic beginnings to the complex world of humanity. The piece is at once semi-scientific (like flipping through a children’s encyclopedia), emotional, surreal, and dream-like.

Infinitely Yours is a meditation on climate catastrophe and the Anthropocene – the proposed current era where human influence has affected almost all realms of earth’s natural systems. Miwa’s shadow

traverses macro and micro scales, as her silhouette shape-shifts to experience the world from various perspectives. An earth overflowing with trash. A person drowning in a plastic filled ocean. A school of fish caught in a trawling net. The work will be an emotionally impactful, embodied illustration of news headlines we see everyday, the complex harm humanity causes to the world, and what it might mean for all of us; humanity, as well as other life, and the earth itself, to be living in this changing world.

“Matreyek’s work is an enchanting blend of animation and live performance; one of the few digital artists who is able to keep a strong element of human presence in her work.” – Venu Magazine, New York City

Cuckoo

Belgium

Feb 7 - 9

Conceived and performed by Jaha Koo

Curated and presented by The Theatre Centre

A journey through the last 20 years of Korean history told by a bunch of talkative rice cookers.

One day when his electric rice cooker informed him that his meal was ready, Jaha Koo experienced a deep sense of isolation. ‘Golibmuwon’ (고립무원) is an untranslatable Korean word expressing the feeling of helpless isolation that characterizes the lives of many young people in Korea today.

Twenty years ago there was a major economic crisis in South Korea, comparable to the financial crash in the United States and Southern Europe in 2008. This crisis had a huge impact on the young generation to which South Korean artist Jaha Koo belongs. He witnessed many endemic problems including youth unemployment and socio-economic inequality. Rising suicide rates, isolation, acute social withdrawal and a fixation on personal appearance are but a few of the symptoms.

In bittersweet and humorous dialogues, Jaha and his clever rice cookers take you on a journey through the last 20 years of Korean history, combining personal experience with political events and reflections on happiness, economic crises and death.

“Cuckoo feels like a peculiar kind of dream, a communication from your subconscious, offering some truth you’ll never be able to translate into words.”

– Henry Gleaden, Exeunt Magazine

“A week later, I’m still haunted by the show, its sounds and images.”

– Dorothy Max Prior, totaltheatre.org.uk

How I Learned to Serve Tea

Canada

Feb 13 - 15

Created and facilitated by Shaista Latif

in association with Koffler Centre of the Arts and Why Not Theatre

A participatory workshop on the politics of capacity and resource sharing, How I Learned to Serve Tea explores dynamics of power through acts of hospitality with artist-facilitator Shaista Latif.

“Assessing the language of invitation and hosting, and how it translates into action is how I learned to serve tea. A hyphenated existence, my life is my work, my work is my life. Some people can categorize and separate but those of us who are marginalized can't afford to do so. Sometimes I wonder if our work has had to evolve into critical interrogation out of necessity? If we lived in a decolonized world what would we be making? Who would we be serving? I think we are all capable and deserving of knowing and living ourselves into these answers. This workshop invites participants to reflect and confront on who gets to have a seat at the table.” – Shaista Latif

“[Shaista] held such complexity for a group of strangers with unique and layered experiences...entirely impressive.”

– Cara Gold, Miles Nadal JCC

Working Class Dinner Party

United Kingdom

February 11

With Scottee & Friends

Curated and presented by The Theatre Centre in partnership with the British Council

You are invited to dinner with Scottee in which he and his guests will talk about the C word ...class!

Scottee grew up and lived in social housing for 31 of the 33 years he has been alive. His dad is a roofer, his mum works for the council, Scottee now works in the arts and so middle class people keep telling him he can't be working class anymore.

Scottee wants you to join him for chats around the dinner table we're not meant to have as we unpick who creates the definitions of class identity and why learning how to be posh in an art world gets you places – you can also sit on your hands and watch the conversation.

Part show, part discussion, and at some point, take away will arrive to feed us all!

Class

United Kingdom

Feb 13 - 15

Created and performed by Scottee

Curated and presented by The Theatre Centre

Scottee grew up around mould, mice and second hand clothes. After a chance meeting with some posh kids, his Mum teaching him to talk proper and him successfully persuading his parents to take him off free school meals Scottee knew he didn't want to be working class.

Scottee uncovers what it is to be embarrassed about where you're from, how you can pretend to be richer than you are and explores why we all get a thrill from watching how the other half live. This is a show for the middle class, those who didn't grow up in poverty.

Class isn't a show for those processing issues around domestic violence, food addiction and the effects of growing up in poverty.

★★★★★ *"A brilliant, angry, damaged, brutal, savagely funny reflection on what it means growing up working-class"*
– *Attitude*

★★★★★ *"Scottee creates theatres of discomfort... If you're middle class, you might prefer to avoid a situation in which you'll be caricatured, patronised or judged; not everyone, of course, has that luxury."* – *The Scotsman*

Certified

Canada

Feb 13 - 15

Written and performed by Jan Derbyshire

Curated and presented by Why Not Theatre

Jan Derbyshire's *Certified* is a hilarious and heart-aching journey through the mental health system. With refreshing humour, this memoir-play cracks open the stigma around mental health and waits for your response.

Comedian and certified insane person Jan Derbyshire turns the audience into a mental health review board to help determine her current state of sanity. Through this fiercely funny one-woman show, Jan tells you all about her experience being certified a total of eight times, and how she got to where she is

today. Join the irreverent fun of Jan's journey through the mental health system and grapple with hefty questions like: how do we define "crazy" and who gets to decide? In this case: you do.

"Jan Derbyshire is a skillful comic who can make you laugh at anything"

- Irish Times

"Fully passes evaluation—a testament to a dynamic performance and delicate storytelling."

- The Georgia Straight

Ancillary Programming

Opening Reception

Thurs / Jan. 30 / 10:30pm

Post-show talk: The Marble in the Basement

Sat / Feb. 1 / following 4:00pm performance

Post-show talk: Café Sarajevo

Sun / Feb. 2 / following 2:00pm performance

Post-show talk: Screen:Moves

Mon/ Feb. 3 / following 7:00pm screening

Book Launch for *Disfigured: On Fairy Tales, Disability, and Making Space* by Amanda Leduc

Wed / Feb 5 / 6:00pm – 8:00pm, presented by Coach House Books in association with SummerWorks

Community Meals

Wed / Feb 5 / 1:00pm – 2:00pm, hosted by The Theatre Centre

Wed / Feb 12 / 1:00pm – 2:00pm, hosted by SummerWorks

Post-show talk: Certified

Sat / Feb. 15 / following 7:00pm performance (this is an audio described performance / talk)

Progress Closing Weekend Party

Sat / Feb. 15 / 10:00pm