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//////// babaamiwizh – blood memory and how we carry ancestral histories //////////
on memory, immersive theatre, improvisation, & absurdity

A Thesis

Submitted to the Faculty

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Degree of

Master of Arts

In

Digital Musics

by Olivia Shortt

Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

Dartmouth College

Hanover, New Hampshire

May 2023

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Dean of the Guarini School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

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ABSTRACT

babaamiwizh – take, carry, guide h/ about¹

babaamiwizh – blood memory and how we carry intergenerational histories: a collection of fragmented stories and thoughts on making Indigenous art. These writings attempt to find the balance of an artist's humanity, the artistic process and working with colonial institutions. I am stitching together my perspective on Indigeneity, museums and the process of repatriation, collaboration with trusted community members, as well as the land and its medicines.

¹ Ojibwe dictionary

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CHI MIIGWECH

To those who are present, part of my life and part of the circle,
and continue to support me.

César Alvarez
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I have been residing on and learning on the unceded territories of the Odanak Abenaki. Even before I arrived at Dartmouth College, I read about the fucked-up history of their “Indian” mascot and the racist chants that students used to yell in the name of school pride. One of the founders of Dartmouth College, Samson Occom, a member of the Mohegan tribe, finally had his papers repatriated in 2022 back to his people, hundreds of years after his involvement with Dartmouth and its foundation. This school was built on the labour of Indigenous people, and it continues to benefit from the land that the school stole.

I live in Toronto, aka Tkarón:to aka Treaty 13 territory. Its name in Kanien’kéha means ‘the place in the water where the trees are standing.’ I have been there since 2007, and it has become my home. I benefit from the land, and I hope to be able to do more for it in return.

I grew up in North Bay, Ontario, near my reservation - Nipissing First Nation, aka Treaty 10 territory. It’s both familiar and distant in my memory. My father used to take me to the reserve to eat bologna sandwiches while we sat in the car and talked. I want to offer more of myself, skills and knowledge gained while at Dartmouth to my community in the near future.

Being alive and Native is an act of resistance, resilience, and activism.²

² Quote from Marcie Rendon - <https://alleynews.org/2020/06/being-alive-and-native-is-an-act-of-resistance-resilience-and-activism-says-marcie-rendon/>

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Figure 1 turkey feather

INTRODUCTION



Figure 2 Photo of childhood friends,
(L-R) Kayla, Kierra, Olivia

Olivia Shortt indishnakaaz. North Bay indongebaa besho Nipissing[‡].

My maternal family is mostly of Irish[§] descent from Millstreet, County Cork, Ireland, whereas my paternal family is Anishinaabe from Nipissing First Nation (with a little French mixed in because of the nearby Québec border) near North Bay, Ontario, Canada^{**}. My maternal grandmother, Johanna, travelled by boat with some of her sisters when she was a teenager in the late 1940s en route to

Toronto, leaving behind a country early in its independence from England after her father, a firefighter, had died. My paternal grandmother, Alice, was not described to me often by either of my parents; my father didn't tell me much about his family. When they first met, he told my mother that his family was dead, even though this wasn't true. My maternal grandmother, Mary (previously known as Johanna), married a man from Newfoundland named Bramwell, had four children named David, Denis, Suzanne, and Craig and worked her entire life. Memories can be moulded; we can choose what to hold onto, and sometimes we can't. Memory is a living, breathing, changing, blurry creature that can morph into any shape.

[‡] greeting in Anishinaabemowin, a language of the Nipissing, Anishinaabek

[§] use of lower-case letters is on purpose and is to not place importance on settler histories as they are not the main character of this story

^{**} this thesis will use the colonial names of most places but if Indigenous names are referenced then the colonial name may appear after in brackets for the first time the Indigenous name is used.

I am an Indigenous Two-Spirit creative researcher and artist whose work spans multiple mediums, including the sonic arts, theatre, craft (fibre, sculpture, puppets), performance and video art forms. My practice and research rely on using processes of collaboration that invite play and non-linear storytelling. I use structured improvisation, my body, ancestral histories, and storytelling in an attempt to decolonize, work in anti-colonial ways, and change power dynamics and habits from training in Western classical music.



Figure 3 Photo by Robert Strong, Olivia Shortt as Nina Boujee

I'm a weirdo who enjoys the absurd and loves using humour, and sarcasm within their work; it's a trickster way of operating. You'll notice a shift in tone in my thesis, I'm not concerned with you understanding it all, but I'm asking you to question yourself and your way of operating within the world we exist in.

Situated in a world of complex entanglements, I work to keep true to the various knowledge systems I access while writing this thesis and the voices carrying those stories. It is inherently an Indigenous way of following your feelings and trusting your gut while creating artistic work. I blend fictionalized aspects of my life with current issues that matter to me and my community, like museum repatriation, language revitalization and global warming. I also love cats, glitter, and internet memes; the broad strokes of my work often lie in fun extremes.

The Museum of the Lost and Found: gaakaazootadiwag:

I created a large-scale, site-specific operatic work that blended improvisation, storytelling, technology, and immersive theatre as a work-in-development project and presented it at Dartmouth College in the Hood Museum on April 8, 2023 during the New Music Festival.



Figure 4 Photo by Robert Strong, Cast and audience in Lathrop Gallery at The Hood Museum, Dartmouth College. Kent Monkman's art featured.

As part of my thesis, my research and stream-of-conscious writing focus on the issues of museums and repatriation with Indigenous communities. Much of my research for this project is not just about the subject matter but also about the collaboration process and how

to create art in anti-colonial ways within structured improvisational methods using text, music, and movement, all in the context of being physically engaged in an art gallery space. In addition to the research, I've also hidden a lot of my family's stories in the opera through the objects that are focused on by the Tour Guide. The art I make prioritizes the humanity of its collaborators. Therefore, the process must hold space for our humanity and not just focus on the end product.

The opera's narrative is a surrealist allegory about the issues with museums and their repatriation processes (specifically of stolen cultural items and the remains of ancestors from Indigenous communities).



Figure 5 Photo by Robert Strong, (L-R) Mac, Joy, Olivier



Figure 6 Photo by Robert Strong, (L-R) Mali, Mac, Olivia in The Hood Museum Russo Atrium, Dartmouth College

The story focuses on a fictional Museum (whose exhibits feature items collected from Lost and Found boxes found all over the globe). The characters that inhabit that space include our tour guide, a tour attendee named Li (who is planted in the audience until activated), the audience (who are on a tour of the museum), the chorus members (Echo and Memory),

Nina Boujee (the trickster character), the Indigenous Docents (who guide the audience and try to keep them as safe as possible during the tour), as well as the band of spirits who have been trapped in the museum for as long as they can remember.

The audience was led from the atrium and invited to engage in the world and with the characters they met as part of their museum tour. Guided to the upper galleries (Northeast and Lathrop on the second floor), the audience's tour ended in the bowels of the museum (in the Gilman Auditorium, Hood Museum), where the chaos culminated in a dense wall of sound and, finally, a scream of anguish between Nina Boujee and Li.



Figure 7 Photo by Robert Strong, (L-R) Nikki, Mac at the end of the opera in the Russo Atrium at The Hood Museum, Dartmouth College

Before attending Dartmouth College, most of my work asked me to surround myself with Indigenous artists from Canada's theatre, dance, and music scenes. I spent time learning from my peers and Elders in those spaces. I am exploring processes that allow freedom to practice mutual respect, cooperation, and trust. The work I did in the past has been predominantly solo/independent. My most recent work engages with artists on a much larger scale; this opera workshop was a chance to incorporate my experiments. It allowed me the hands-on experience to engage meaningfully with these artists.

My memory is like a bunch of glittery snapshots and flashes lighting up the most chaotic and fragmented tableaux of the last thirty-three years. These memories are a mix between being crystal clear or blurry fragmented feelings of what I think happened, as reliable as they can be since there aren't many photos or videos from my childhood. My friends remind me of the moments I can't bring up immediately and seem to understand the details better than I do. I struggle to remember many things. The internet tells me that it's related to trauma, but it could also be related to ADHD; it doesn't matter right now, and I don't care about that as much as I used to. Some of what I've shared and will share may be inaccurate, but I want you to know that this is not an apology; it's just my reality.

****insert shoulder shrug gesture here****

During the third year of my undergraduate degree in performance, my saxophone teacher told our studio that we had to write program notes for our recitals but offered no rubric on how to do this, so I opted for less traditional program notes. My moments of rebellion can often come out in small ways; in this case, they came out through my program notes. My third-year recital program notes consisted of text fragments from songs I felt connected to and with each piece I presented as part of my recital. In this thesis, my choice to associate my chapters with pieces of music (songs with text and instrumental works) is not an act of rebellion but a full-circle moment, maybe a moment of healing and knowing myself better in my thirties. Circles are highly important in Anishinaabe communities. It symbolizes many parts of nature, including the interdependence between life forms. Many Indigenous works of theatre are presented in the round, even though it can be one of the more complicated methods of presenting theatre.

We perform in circles, dance and work in circles, always moving clockwise. There is a loop we all exist within and interact with. Each chapter will have a song or piece of music that I'm associating with it. Each song has its own attributed memories from my life that I remember as well as I can. Details will blur, and sometimes I misremember those details. Each song doesn't always have an obvious connection to the chapter. Sometimes, the only connection is the feeling I get from the music or specific moments in the piece that connects to some of the chapter's presented materials. I have a feeling

from certain songs that makes me trust they should be present alongside the words in that chapter. I recommend listening to these songs while you read or on their own, separate from the thesis.



Figure 8 Photo by Robert Strong, (L-R) Raegan, Piper, Ally in the Northeast Gallery at The Hood Museum, Dartmouth College

The last couple of years has seen my work evolve with the inclusion of video art and a growing desire to incorporate improvisation. Recent works of influence on me or inspired me include New Red Order's *Join the Informants*, Outside the March's *The Ministry of Mundane Mysteries*, Cliff Cardinal's *The land acknowledgement, or as you like it*, Aja Couchois Duncan,

Douglas Kearney, Raven Chacon and Du Yun's *Sweetland*, Nina Runa Essendrop's *Music Creatures*, Donald Glover's *Swarm*, Third Rail Projects *Then She Fell*, Yolanda Bonnell's *bug*, Sasha Velour's *Nightgowns*, Dasha Plett's *805-4821*, Carmen Aguirre's *Broken Tailbone*, Annie Baker's *The Flick*, Whells Phargo Productions *Fake Ghost Tours*, Complicite's *The Encounter*, Bijuriya's *Portraits*, Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, Vaiva Grainytė and Lina Lapelytė's *Sun and Sea*, Lucy Darling's *An Exceptional Night In with Lucy Darling* and any works by Xu Bing, Ai Wei Wei and Nam June Paik.



Figure 9 Photo by Robert Strong, Moss Man wearing running shoes, covered in butterflies in the Lathrop Gallery at the Hood Museum, Dartmouth College.

To name most of the works in the previous paragraph, I had to go through my email and Google calendar to remember what each piece was called or get enough details to google them. Memory is like that for me; a visual, sonic, or fragmented cybernetic vibration of information captured in the nebulous blobs of storage space inside my brain, cloud storage units on the internet.

Note to the reader: Page one (Pg. 1) doesn't exist. It doesn't need to exist, and I don't remember where it went, so I assume it's gone, just like some of my memories.



Figure 10 Photo by Robert Strong, (Indigenous Undergrads) Docents: Nizhonie, Abigail, Trinity, Madeleine, Eliza, Antonio in The Hood Museum Russo Atrium, Dartmouth College

***** lip trill here: I'm too tired to think too deeply about page one and why formatting in a Word document is an absolute nightmare *****

LIST AND DISCUSSION OF TERMS, PLACES, OR IDEAS

REPATRIATION: The long overdue process of working with tribes/nations to find an agreed-upon method of returning cultural items and ancestors potentially belonging to those tribes or nations. It's a long and costly process (financially, emotionally, spiritually, and physically) supposedly held up to standards by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) – but it also exists outside of NAGPRA.

REMATRIATION: Rematriation is a way of looking at relationships between Indigenous people and the land, “honoring our matrilineal societies, and in opposition of patriarchal violence and dynamics”⁶. Type rematriation into any document, and your dictionary will most likely attempt to change it to repatriation.

DECOLONIZATION: A term that organizations are fond of throwing around when they think they are doing the hard work of creating an environment for their audiences and contractors that feels safe, open to discussion and willing to subvert the expectations of conservative audiences.

ANTI-COLONIAL: Working away from colonial institutions' ways of working within capitalism, philanthropy, and the world of fundraising. Inspired by Indigenous communities, the focus is on building up the individuals within the group and draws upon the seven-grandfather teachings (humility, wisdom, truth, bravery, honesty, respect, and love).

INDIGENIZING: Making things more Native or Indigenous.

INDIAN: A term you will see in quotations more often than in my text. Commonly used in the United States amongst Indigenous peoples as well as in colloquial, slang or abbreviated slang terms (ex., NDN tacos).

TRICKSTER: A character common to many Indigenous nations that can move between the spirit and human worlds. Characteristics can include being a coward, rebel, fool, creator, humorous, and deceitful. Often takes the form of a human but also of animals (different depending on the nation, but some examples are coyote, rabbit, and raven). Will often mess with the tone of serious documents like a Master's thesis.

TRANSPARENCY: Something lacking in many institutions and larger organizations.

ANISHINAABEMOWIN: The language of my nation that I have been working on for the last few years and am working on fluency. Sometimes referred to as Ojibwemowin.

MAXIMALISM: A form of protection for my heart.

HAIDA GWAI: “Haida Gwaii is located 100 kilometres west of the northern coast of British Columbia, Canada and is an isolated group of over 200 islands, large and small, totalling approximately 3750 square miles or 1,000,000 hectares⁷”. Occupied by the Haida Nation.

⁶ <https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/what-is-rematriation/>

⁷ <https://www.haidanation.ca/haida-gwaii/>

INSTITUTIONS WITH THE HIGHEST NUMBER OF ANCESTORS IN THEIR FACILITIES
(AS OF SPRING 2023):

**Ten institutions hold about half of the reported
Native American remains that have not been made
available for return to tribes.**

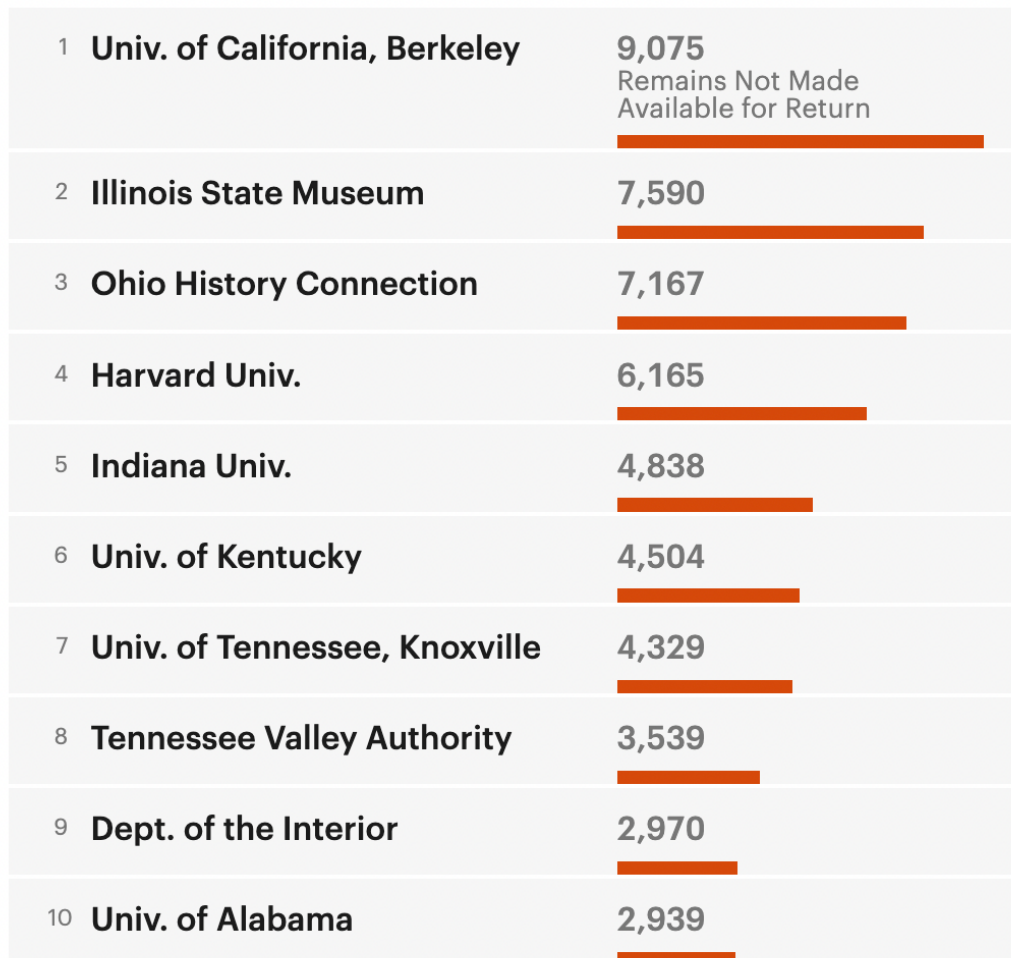


Figure 11 <https://projects.propublica.org/repatriation-nagpra-database/>

**CHAPTER 1 – dibaajimo,
they tell a story**

I WOULD DO ANYTHING FOR LOVE (BUT I WON'T DO THAT) - 1993
WRITTEN BY JIM STEINMAN, RECORDED BY MEATLOAF & LORRAINE CROSBY

*♪ After a while you'll forget everything ♪
It was a brief interlude and a midsummer night's fling
And you'll see that it's time to move on
No, I won't do that
♪ I won't do that ♪*

MEMORY

MUSEUMS

ARCHIVES

REPATRIATION

I go back and forth between, wondering if it feels like my memory is getting worse or if it's getting better. It's always been bad, but there was a point when I was twelve and could remember every second of every moment of my life (or at least I thought so). I remember telling my teacher that the number of absent days on my report card was incorrect. I could name every day I was missing and why. I can barely remember what I said to people in meetings a few days ago or what advice I offered friends while riding the subway. Words like dissociation are now part of my lexicon to describe various moments when I am no longer fully present. My body takes on that moment, creating and deleting aspects of the memory for me.



Figure 12, High School Yearbook Photo, Olivia with a baritone sax on their head

After my first term at Dartmouth College, I found out my father was dying and already in a coma. I knew there would be a lot to deal with administratively. At the time, I thought I was legally obligated to take care of the admin that comes with a parent's death, as I was his only child and wasn't aware that he had re-married. Even now, I struggle to remember everything that happened; it feels distant and blurred in my memory. It was a

Friday fall of 2021; I had finished a Zoom meeting and checked my email, seeing that someone had sent me a message through my website.

Subject: Jesse Shortt **Message:** URGENT Please call me

My father and I hadn't spoken in a long time; his last words to me were angry and confused me. Imagine it's 2012, and after having a fun time away at a saxophone conference in Arizona, you come back to Toronto to realize that you don't want to work an office job anymore because you might still love music and the arts, do some errands like take your cat to the vet for a check-up and come home to read the following email:

SUBJECT: OLIVIA

MESSAGE: YOU BITCH

YOU CAUSE EVERYTHING BETWEEN ME AND YOUR MOTHER
SHE DID NOT WANT TO SEE ME EVER AGAIN AND YOU CAUSE IT BY TELLING
HER WHAT EVER YOU SAID.

I LIVED ON THE STREET FOR THREE MONTHS WITH NO HOME NO FOOD NO
PLACE TO SLEEP AND WITH VISION THAT HAS BEEN TO THE POINT I CAN'T SEE.
I HATE BOTH OF YOU , YOUR MOTHER AND YOU / YOU CAUSE THIS AND I WILL
NEVER FORGIVE YOU FOR THIS, I NEVER WANT TO HEAR OR SEE YOU OR
YOUR MOTHER EVER, I HATE YOU.

I had imagined my father's end-of-life scenario a few times. The hallucination usually ended with me googling his name and seeing a neutral obituary that someone else had typed out where either my name or my mother's name wouldn't be mentioned instead of the real-life scenario where I receive a brief email through my website telling me almost nothing but also just enough for me to know what was coming.

I remember calling the phone number in the email I had received to find out what was happening with my father. I remember calling the hospital in Hamilton and speaking with Dr. Ali. I remember the back and forth that weekend of checking my phone because of how complicated it was to contact the hospital. I remember that I couldn't return to Canada immediately because of COVID restrictions, so I saw an opera in Boston written by Wayne Shorter and Esperanza Spalding (featuring my friend Alexandra Smither as

one of several Iphigenia) to keep myself distracted. I remember wondering if I should feel guilty. I remember eventually calling my mother to tell her what was happening. I remember getting to the Boston airport and asking my friend if they could drive me from Toronto to Hamilton in a car I rented. I remember my friend and I pretending to be married so I wouldn't have to go in alone. I remember getting to the hospital and feeling empty. I remember seeing a person with my father's ID who no longer looked like him. Silent, skin stretched across an empty shell. I remember thinking, "I hope this was some weird mistake, and they contacted the wrong person." I also remember thinking that I felt terrible thinking that last thought because it meant someone else would be lying there instead, and someone else's family would have to go through everything I had gone through. I remember talking to someone about the possibility of donating organs. I remember driving back to Toronto. I remember my upstairs neighbour knocking on my window because I didn't answer the hospital's phone call at 5 am (and the hospital also had my neighbour's phone number). I remember hearing Dr. Ali tell me my father wasn't a suitable donor and that they had taken him off life support (per my wishes). I remember Dr. Ali saying that my father had died that morning. I remember not crying for a long time. I remember going to his apartment and clearing it out with my friends. I remember all the weird things we found that told me about my father's brief time in this apartment. I remember seeing a hunting license and telling my friends to be on the lookout for a gun. I remember the weird people who stopped by and befriended my father or seemed to know a little bit about him. I remember finding out that he had mentioned me occasionally. I remember finding old photos of me in his briefcase. I remember finding my fourth-year undergrad recital program from 2011 in his briefcase – the last time I saw him in person.

It took almost a month before it all hit me.

I remember feeling angry for a long time and not knowing how to make that feeling stop. I remember being angry at him for not having a will and for not having his (second) wife listed as an emergency contact (which resulted in an awkward email transaction where I got to e-meet her and then tell her that I had already cremated him), for disappearing from my life when I was twenty-one and for his last email to me. I remember the overall story, but the minor details have already been obscured. I lived this story, yet it already feels compartmentalized in my brain and body and, more than likely, in my blood. I

couldn't remember the name of the person who emailed me, and I couldn't even remember what the email looked like; I had to go back into my email and copy it. I haven't seen that email since November 2021.

Death is complicated, not just in its admin but also in the lack of answers you get about the memories you share with the dead. You are left behind to sift through the pool of memories either to grieve the loss of a person and/or to grieve the answers you'll never receive.

Whenever people speak about remembrance devices such as memory palaces, I imagine everyone inside their glittery gay castles creating mnemonic or visual devices to recall information. It's the most Liberace-esque image I can think of to recall the definition of a memory palace because I usually google terms like *memory palace* or *mnemonic*. I remember being a small child singing my version of Meatloaf's *I would do anything for Love (but I Won't Do That)*, the original twelve-minute version, of course, not the five-minute radio edit. My mom had told me she was a fan of his music when she was younger, and that might be the main reason I listen to his music. It was another way to connect with my mom. Meatloaf was dramatic and Liberace-esque in his grandeur and over-the-top performances, enveloped by productions that included massive sets and ruffled shirts with motorcycles and lots of backup singers. My mom taught me about Liberace. I crave maximalism, and I think Meatloaf was my first exposure to that desire. Maximalism not only acts as armour for me but also for my work. Like a security blanket, there's an element of protection that comes from the density and sensory overload in my work. I pull a lot of inspiration from artists like Meatloaf, even if it's not a direct correlation.

This document is so far from maximalism; it's pretty transparent. While my work contains multitudes, I desire transparency from myself and others I collaborate with. I imagine this thesis holding these recollections for me to return to when I need to mine my memories and the internet has collapsed. While a document like this is not a living one in the sense of an online document that can be altered, I see it as living and breathing in this moment, acting as a passive reminder of my past and a reminder of my time here at Dartmouth College.



Figure 13 Photo by Robert Strong, (L-R) Ally, Olivier, Eli in *The Hood Museum Northeast Gallery, Dartmouth College. Printing the Revolution* artwork featured.

♪ Some days it don't come easy ♪
Some days it don't come hard
Some days it don't come at all
♪ And these are the days that never end ♪

Histories are carried, and memory lives on within objects. Cultural items and ancestors call out to their communities to bring them home; it's a familiar story I've read about in the repatriation process. Indigenous folks working in Western museums hear children's laughter when the museum is closed, only to find out, after asking the museum staff, that



Figure 14 Photo by Robert Strong, Nikki

there are ancestors and cultural items in storage, out of sight. *The Repatriation Handbook* and other books discuss case studies in the repatriation of items back to the Haida Gwaii, where communities realize they hadn't heard their ancestors call out until specific moments, notably when the community was ready to bring them home. The ancestors were waiting until it was the right time to call out – during a period when the nation or tribe was ready to move forward with repatriation, whether it was related to

being emotionally prepared, financially ready, or physically ready to take in the objects or the ancestral remains. The items in *The Museum of the Lost and Found: gaakaazootaadiwag* are essential to me and the histories they carried while I wrote the texts. These fictionalized objects in the opera are infused with memories, similar to how the cultural artifacts and ancestors from museums, when returned, are infused with the history of the repatriation process itself.

I cut off my hair in early 2022. Hair holds onto memories and wisdom learned while it's been growing. I asked my friend Trevor Van de Velde if he had an extra rice cooker that I could use to burn my hair and some sage inside. I asked another friend Piper Hill to join me and Trevor (for moral support) as I burned the long pieces of hair I had been growing for several years. When someone, who is either close to you or important in your life, dies, you cut your hair and burn it to release the energy it contains. I remember the disgusting smell that rose up as my hair burned. The three of us were sitting on the back porch of Trevor's house as the smell altered back and forth from hair to sage. I dumped the ashes in Trevor's backyard and walked home that night feeling a huge release. The smell of burning hair followed me for a long time until, one day; it was gone from my memory. The last few years have been more challenging to navigate than I expected.

The Native American Graves Protection & Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) is a federal law enacted in 1990, requiring institutions to repatriate cultural items and ancestors back to their communities. Although it's been thirty years since this law was passed, many institutions worldwide still hold onto ancestors from Indigenous communities on Turtle Island. The institution that I currently attend and will graduate from, Dartmouth College, has many ancestral remains and, as of March 28th, 2023, revealed:

Two osteological reviews by College staff, as well as an ongoing external audit by forensic anthropologists and archeologists, uncovered "the skeletal remains of 15 individuals identified as Native American," the statement wrote, adding that 100 bones without a Hood Museum accession number, or catalogue number, were flagged as "potentially problematic." According to anthropology records, some of the discovered bones were a part of human osteology teaching labs as recently as the fall of 2022.⁸

⁸ <https://www.thedartmouth.com/article/2023/03/remains-of-15-native-american-individuals-discovered-in-colleges-collections>

Dartmouth College and many other institutions continue to hold onto cultural items and ancestors as the repatriation process is long and complicated for all parties involved. There can be mislabelling or a lack of labelling in general on the institution's part, confusion about what communities the item or ancestor should go back to and lots of fundraising that are often required of the institution and the community involved. There is a financial burden and an emotional toll that the process can place on the communities affected. Bringing items or ancestors home is a much-needed part of the reconciliation process for colonized countries such as the United States and Canada with the Indigenous communities they continue to try to erase (read: genocide) or whose existence they try to ignore entirely.

"The keeping of ancestral remains continues to wound the living and prevents any semblance of closure for past trauma."⁹

"While the number of bodies in Canadian Institutions is currently unknown, the physical remains of over three hundred thousand Aboriginal People were deposited in American institutions such as natural history and ethnology museums, archaeology laboratories and universities. Remains from at least 1,000 Indigenous North Americans were sent to the United Kingdom and contribute to the 61,000 human remains in the British collections".¹⁰

⁹ The Force of Family pg. 6

¹⁰ The Force of Family pg. 7

**CHAPTER 2 – waasizo,
s/he or it (animate) shines, glitters, reflects light**

HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN - 1964

THE ANIMALS (COVER), COMPOSER UNKNOWN

*♪ There is a house way down in New Orleans ♪
They call the Rising Sun
And it's been the ruin of many a poor boy
♪ And God I know I'm one ♪*



*Figure 15 Photo by Jenn Collins,
Olivia dressed as Nina.*

Nina Boujee is a character that I've been building up since the pandemic. They/he/she is your cHa0tiC & weird drag-adjacent Two-Spirit Trickster friend named after Nanaboozhoo (Anishinabek Trickster character). Nina was a way for me to express different aspects of femininity, masculinity, and ambiguity/fluidity in gender during the pandemic. The opera was my opportunity to embody Nina live, they/he/she is representative of the many parts of my personality that all want to say "fuck you" to the absurdity of being alive today and working within the systems that control us. Nina is also a throwback to my childhood dreams and everything I loved about being a child: play, experimentation, gender fuckery and the confidence to do anything (read: be wild, chaotic and gregarious). Nina has become a central part of the opera, operating as a leader, unreliable narrator, and orchestrator of mischief amongst the spirits living in the museum/art gallery. Part of my character personality is inspired by Kalani Queypo's character Wade on the CBC show *Trickster* (based on Eden Robinson's book *Son of a Trickster*), and part of my character is also inspired by the spirit of my childhood that wanted to be a little shithead all the time (but usually held back).

Terms like decolonization and Indigenizing have become part of the colloquial conversation around Indigenous artists within Western artmaking, as referenced by Dylan Robinson in his book *'Hungry Listening,'* regarding the one-sided and transactional relationship that can occur when Western art music tries to incorporate Indigenous

artists into a work. Robinson talks about how, more often than not, Western organizations invite Indigenous artists to participate in their artistic process while ignoring any Indigenous ways of working or knowledge that those artists bring with them, like taking space to have a meal together, using any medicines to cleanse a space (ex. smudging) or being able to work in a way that is more responsive to the community's needs (ex. slowing down, repetition, finding alternate ways of working through a group piece of art). Robinson suggests that collaboration should operate in reverse, where Western organizations and artists are invited into Indigenous ways of knowing and working.

I've spent years thinking that if you are operating in colonial spaces, under colonial terms, it's operating under the lens of colonialism, and that's not entirely true. Spaces, like objects, have histories that exist within their walls and structures; the land they occupy is alive with the stories of those who came before and those who will come again. I am an Indigenous person living in an Indigenous body, experiencing life as an Indigenous creative. Rena Roussin, an Indigenous academic, researcher, and member of the Circle of Artists (Canadian Opera Company's group of Indigenous consultants), speaks to our work as anti-colonial since it may be difficult or impossible to decolonize anything you do under colonialism. Recognizing that there's still much work ahead of Indigenous artists, we must be mindful of the who, what, when, where, why and how within our working processes.

The opera has taken on many forms and was not originally intended to be an opera. From text intended for someone else's project, to multiple live streams throughout 2020 using the original text (then made up of various stories about items that I had lost and then found their way back to me), the core material has changed so much and gone in a few different directions. At this point, I don't want to think as much about the past versions. Perhaps, it's best to frame these previous ideas of what the work could look like as experiments that a scientifically inclined graduate student would have gone through to get the results that show you how important the process of this work is.

It's been essential for me to include Indigenous voices as part of the work. I hired six Indigenous Undergrad students to act as Docents for the open rehearsal on Friday, April

7th, and the workshop presentation on Saturday, April 8th, 2023. Not only are these students there to act as caretakers for any issues that arise while the tour is occurring (ex., someone has an emergency and needs to leave, they can be safely guided out and connected with the Hood staff and others required to help), they are also witnessing the work both as themselves and as their caretaking characters (which in some way I link to the Indigenous land and water protectors involved with defending land and waterways in Wet'suwet'en, Standing Rock, and the Oka Crisis).

In 2017, I watched a dress rehearsal of Harry Somers's *Louis Riel*, an opera commissioned in 1967 and remounted for Canada's 150th anniversary at the Canadian Opera Company. In that production, they attempted to improve upon the entirely white-led creative work from 1967 by adding four lead Indigenous performers in newly added scenes and a group of people on stage known as the Land Assembly, consisting of Indigenous performers who are there to silently bear witness.

"The real Louis Riel, executed in 1885 as a traitor to Canada. He sought to preserve Métis rights and culture as their homelands were progressively encroached on due to Canada's push toward settlement of the West. He led two resistance movements – the Red River Rebellion in Manitoba in 1870 and the Northwest Rebellion in Saskatchewan in 1885. Today Manitobans celebrate a statutory holiday in his honour".¹¹

The docents in my opera are not there to be silenced but rather to watch, guide and aid as needed during the performance. I have had the best experiences when I've been in rooms filled with Indigenous artists. I will continue to find ways to involve more indigenous people in various roles as part of the team, both on the creative and production sides of the work. In addition to Indigenous students acting as docents present during the performance, I recorded a few students speaking about objects that mattered to them. The audio recorded was used in a video at the end of the opera; as the chaos builds up and the world seems to be imploding, these voices are some of our last comforts and ambiguously could represent several concepts. Each docent wore red glasses, a colour that the ancestors can see in the spirit world. The docents are also there to look out for the band members who are spirits trapped in the museum. In

¹¹ <https://www.cbc.ca/news/entertainment/louis-ri-el-canadian-opera-company-1.4074163>

addition to the glasses, the docents will be wearing headbands covered in red monarchs.



Figure 16 Polaroid of Olivia sitting on the lap of some man dressed as Santa. Olivia looks uncomfortable and stiff.

When I was a child growing up in North Bay, Ontario, our neighbour offered to take me out to find monarch butterfly eggs and show me how to raise them. I spent the entire summer watching the eggs we collected from milkweed grow in the empty rectangular fish tank. Death occurs along the journey from egg to caterpillar to cocoon to emergence. Only some of the eggs made it through the whole process. I remember finding it most tragic when they had crystallized and died in their cocoon as they had begun a transformation process only for it to end

there. Monarchs usually go south during the winter, so I said goodbye to the monarchs I had raised once the colder autumn weather settled in. Migration and butterflies are intertwined with each other. Those monarchs from my childhood would be long dead, as they live for less than a year at most. Still, I imagine the spirits of the ones I raised fluttering around our docents, helping them protect the audience in my story from the possibility of entrapment in the museum.

I originally heard *House of the Rising Sun* as a Hammond organ solo on a cassette from 1971: *Big Jim 'H' & His Men Of Rhythm – Hammond Organ Dance Party*. I bought this cassette from a second-hand shop (Rebuilt Resources) in North Bay, Ontario.

♪ *Oh, mother, tell your children* ♪
Not to do what I have done
Spend your lives in sin and misery
♪ *In the House of the Rising Sun* ♪

**CHAPTER 3 – maawanji'idiwag
they come together, meet with each other, have a meeting**

MOANIN' - 1960

CHARLES MINGUS

♪ INSERT HERE THE MOST AMAZING BARITONE SAXOPHONE SOLO EVER ♪

I sometimes need to remind past-me of why I started playing the baritone saxophone and continued playing the instrument. Regardless of the strenuous relationship that I've had with the instrument (mainly with its teachers), some of my favourite musicians growing up were baritone sax players, including Gerry Mulligan, Shirantha Beddage, and Pepper Adams, who performed the famous Bari solo at the start of *Moanin'*.



Figure 17 Yearbook Photo from Grade Ten Yearbook, Olivia in clothes mostly made by their mother.

The saxophone was an instrument that resonated the most with my eleven-year-old brain. We were brought in to watch an instrument parade the current high school kids put on. I instantly clicked with the shiny, multi-buttoned, and chaotic instrument. As a teen, I was told that I reminded people of a magpie (someone who loved shiny things); the saxophone strikes me as a magpie's sonic and visual representation.

I studied classical saxophone, which, often enough, doesn't lead to any full-time careers outside of being a saxophone teacher or playing in military and naval bands. As an instrument, it's already on the margins of many traditional, full-time, paying ensembles in North America (ex., orchestra jobs). It focuses heavily on the vast range of colours that its metal tube can produce. Improvisation as a way of storytelling became very apparent to me at one point in my career as a saxophonist. The saxophone, in some ways, allowed me to think of myself as a performer versus solely being a technician and allowed me to stop desiring virtuosity. I followed my intuition into theatre and arts administration as I could be a part of other art forms without formal training or experience. Eventually, I realized that I knew more about my body as a saxophonist who had learned a lot of experimental and theatrical work. Crossing over into working with

dancers and actors in shows in Toronto expanded where I could go with my ideas and even offered me the opportunity to create work in spaces meant for works-in-development.

I'm interested in treading the line between interacting with audiences without expecting them to engage back or speak. As someone who has gone to see numerous shows that use immersive or interactive theatre (such as Outside the March's *The Ministry of Mundane Mysteries*, Third Rail Projects *Then She Fell*, Whells Phargo Productions *Fake Ghost Tours* and Lucy Darling's *An Exceptional Night In with Lucy Darling*) I know that I'm often craving a way to engage and for the choice to feel like it's mine to make even if that's only partially true. Understanding my level of anxiety and knowing that while I love to push people's buttons, I still prefer to allow audiences a level of agency and control over how much they become engaged with the story at hand. What storytelling (technical, text, visual/design like video or costumes, sonic) elements will disengage an audience member and what aspects will create ethical issues for the audience members? During my studies at the University of Toronto, I took a music business class run by an artist manager who told us to "consider every element of the audience's perspective, from the moment they go to the website to buy a ticket to the point where they've stepped in through the venue's door to the show itself." As part of my process and considerations for creating my work, this has stuck with me.

There's a specific joy that I have felt when participating as an audience member in immersive theatre. A work that I think about often is *Then She Fell* by Third Rail Projects. The story is a blending of the real-life characters that wrote or inspired *Alice in Wonderland* and the fictional worlds of both *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the looking glass*. *Then She Fell* had fragments of papers implying that the depiction of Lewis Carroll and his relationship with the child who inspired the character of Alice could be problematic, all while weaving in the stories that the author had written to entertain Alice. There was one striking moment when I had been placed in a chair under the stairs, and I looked to my left only to see a mirror that reflected a grown-up Alice bathing. This actor, speaking to me as though we might know each other, eventually asked me to pass them the dress hanging off the door. More often than not, during the performance, I was alone with a character experiencing a one-on-one moment where I was tasked with

something simple that helped move the story forward. Pulling apart the worlds we live in and being asked to offer a bit of ourselves under the guise of agency interests me in creating work that allows and invites many perspectives to the conversation at hand. My desire to make work that asks questions about accessibility (in its multitude of forms that it can come in) keeps pushing me to look at how artists choose what level of responsibility they want to engage with. While *Then She Fell* was an incredible experience for me as an able-bodied person, any people with space or physical accessibility needs were automatically not able to participate. This has remained with me, and I continue to think about how much we can invite people in when we're working earlier in the process to include them.

"The onus is thus on the artist to create an atmosphere and scenario for an audience to be open to an interactive experience, and to understand the techniques and considerations necessary to successfully engage with your patrons. After all, the audience is placing their individual and collective trust in you, the artist(s), as soon as they enter the theatre..."

If you want to be left alone, there are plenty of other options out there, but at its root, our art form functions to address a moment of social need, the need to be in a room full of people, to share an experience together, at a specific moment in time, in a space where the symbols and aesthetics can be adjusted to address this moment now, and this audience here...

I do periodically see in other theatres what I refer to as "false audience participation" where an actor "in character" solicits the interaction of an audience member. The falsity comes from the fact that the two are not on equal footing, one is pretending to be someone else—often somewhere and some-time else—while the other, the audience member, is stuck with the awkward predicament of whether or not to enter into a fabricated reality where they don't know what to do. This often results in a demeaning or condescending role for the audience member. Since we are always ourselves on stage and exist in that immediate moment in time and space, we open the door for audience members to join us honestly as themselves. No matter what their response, it is right..."¹²

I prioritize the process of workshopping, rehearsing, and making art in a room full of humans with unique experiences, trauma, and upbringings. Too often, in my past life as a chamber musician working in classical spaces, you would sit down and immediately start rehearsing without any thought about where everything might be emotionally that day. Somehow, the human aspect of performing was not a priority, and you were there to get a job done, not come with your whole self.

¹² Interactive vs immersive: <https://howlround.com/celebrating-audience>

CHAPTER 3 – maawanji'idiwag
they come together, meet with each other, have a meeting

CHAPTER 4 – bawaajigan
a dream, a vision

WEREWOLVES OF LONDON - 1978

WRITTEN BY WARREN ZEVON, LEROY MARINELL, AND WADDY WACHTEL,

RECORDED BY WARREN ZEVON

♪ You hear him howling around your kitchen door ♪
You better not let him in
Little old lady got mutilated late last night
♪ Werewolves of London again ♪

IMMERSIVE THEATRE

THEATRE

STORYTELLING

AUDIENCE EXPERIENCE

DEvised THEATRE

PARTICIPATORY THEATRE

ABSURDITY

CAMP

INDIGENEITY

IDENTITY

While I draw much inspiration from my daily activities, current issues and internet memes, several artists' work motivates me and inspires how I approach my artmaking.



Figure 18 "The New Red Order (NRO), a public secret society, employs non-Indigenous allies and accomplices for Indigenous ends.

The New Red Order's *Join the Informants* uses satire and fictional propaganda in a way that aligns closely with my artistic humour and my storytelling methods. What I appreciate most is the directness of New Red Order's work and what it means to talk about Indigeneity in their work (in what's known as the USA) while addressing the issues that plague

Indigenous peoples (such as 'pretendians' or 'descendians') while using text and visuals

(such as video or testimonials). Their work is absurd and cheesy while being aware of what the message is trying to convey outside of satire.

Maybe it's because I'm a recovering 'people pleaser' after studying at a conservatory, and maybe it's because my Irish family has a dry sense of humour, but for me, sarcasm, satire and absurdity have always had a special place in my work and my humour in general. These forms of humour create their own world that doesn't allow the audience to feel comfortable and also forces the audience to think about what is provoking this uncomfortable feeling. I particularly love a good piece of propaganda that toes the line between making a joke and being dead serious about the issue.

During times of political turmoil and environmental catastrophe, Indigenous knowledge is increasingly recognized as a commodity with rising value, capable of remedying modern ills. As many enterprise to find efficient means to extract this resource, Indigenous people are asked to provide information on their culture and speak on behalf of their communities.

Seeking to bypass an idealized irretrievable past, the NRO uses the current demand for indigeneity to imagine Indigenous futures and expand Indigenous agency through services like the Informants Pilot Program”.

Raven Chacon and Du Yun's Sweetland

The Arrivals wash up on the shore. They make contact with another civilization they call “the Hosts.” And from there, the story splinters, following diverging perspectives. Starting as a procession through the LA State Historic Park, Sweet Land becomes an opera that erases itself.¹³



Figure 19, Sweetland

Sweetland is one of the first operas that felt like it was made for me. The Indigenous voices were heavily threaded through sound, text and, literally, through the costumes. Commercially popular operas, music theatre pieces and musicals have often left me wanting more from the experience. Racism, homophobia, and other

¹³ theindustryla.org/sweet-land-opera/

forms of hatred still live in these art forms, making them impossible to digest at this point in my life. I don't tolerate them since there's so much more available to me as a queer Indigenous human wanting to enjoy the time I engage with art.

Similarly to Sweetland, I intend to keep engaging with the histories of this land and the territory I occupy to tell stories relating to less commonly known histories and keep Indigenous stories moving forward. During his speech at the 2018 Polaris Prize Awards in what-we-currently-know-as-Canada, Jeremy Dutcher said, "You are in the midst of an Indigenous renaissance." I keep that thought close to my heart because it reminds me of the work done by Elder artists such as Buffy Sainte-Marie. I'm acknowledging that I don't want to be passive in how I work, as it matters to me how Indigenous peoples are perceived and how our stories are presented on the world stage.

The collaborative nature of the teams excited me, having two composers, two librettists and two directors. It felt like a demonstration of a future of collaboration and collective working that interests me. I'm still working in a single-vision kind of way, and it still feels hierarchical and still feels colonial. If the art I make in the future is to be as honest as I want, then I think I am still working on developing relationships with artists I trust and want to be in conversation with during the creative process.

Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, Vaiva Grainytė and Lina Lapelytė's *Sun and Sea*

I went to London, England, to hang out with my friend Elischa Kaminer, meet one of my pandemic Zoom collaborators, Aliayta Foon-Dancoes, (for the first time in person and stay at her house) and explore London while I was there. *Sun and Sea* had been suggested as a piece of art I should go see; it felt kismet when Elischa suggested we get tickets for Saturday, July 9, 2023, and watch it at The Albany (in south London during its UK premiere) while I was in town.

"Durational work will unfold on a loop over several hours. Audiences will watch from the balcony as dozens of performers bring the scene to life. At first appearing to present a vision of a mundane afternoon at the beach, at the heart of Sun & Sea lies an urgent exploration of our relationship with the planet, the threat climate change presents and the dangers we face if ignored. Presented as Lithuania's national entry for the 2019 Venice

Biennale, [by] Sun & Sea's all-female creative team – composer Lina Lapelytė, librettist Vaiva Grainytė and director Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė.¹⁴”

“Imagine a beach – you within it, or better: watching from above – the burning sun, sunscreen and bright bathing suits and sweaty palms and legs. Tired limbs sprawled lazily across a mosaic of towels. Imagine the occasional squeal of children, laughter, the sound of an ice cream van in the distance. The musical rhythm of waves on the surf, a soothing sound (on this particular beach, not elsewhere). The crinkling of plastic bags whirling in the



Figure 20 Rugilė Barzdžiukaitė, Vaiva Grainytė and Lina Lapelytė's Sun and Sea, at The Albany (London, England).

air, their silent floating, jellyfish-like, below the waterline. The rumble of a volcano, or of an airplane, or a speedboat. Then a chorus of songs: everyday songs, songs of worry and of boredom, songs of almost nothing. And below them: the slow creaking of an exhausted Earth, a gasp. (Lucia Pietroiusti)¹⁵”.

What I often appreciate from work dealing with current topics, such as the climate crisis, is a level of self-awareness that lets you in on the joke but also forces you to think about why the darkness of the joke is funny (i.e., The world seemingly ending). In between pieces about volcanoes erupting and the world dying, there were songs sung in German about the ingredients on the SPF bottle and songs lamenting what happens next in the world. I wish works like this would consider Indigenous people's point of view. Often ignored in conversations about their communities, resources, or global positions (as water and land protectors), the conversation can be one-sided. It often errs on the apocalyptic side without thinking about how to undo damage or reimagine solutions to the problem. I've been impressed with many works because of the design and thought process behind how those design choices carried a story. What I was excited by most was the real-ness of the atmosphere in which this work was performed. The venue circled around the beachgoers from all angles, it was humid inside, and there was a

¹⁴ <https://www.serpentinegalleries.org/whats-on/sun-sea/>

¹⁵ <https://www.sunandsea.lt/en>

constant shift of people entering and exiting the beach (as if we were hanging out at the local beach).

Before seeing *Sun and Sea*, I had been in Aarhus, Denmark participating in a new music workshop, The Danish New Music Academy. I would soon be headed to the rural parts of Dooneen, Mill Street, Cork, Ireland (where I would attempt to connect with the land that had been the childhood home of my maternal grandmother.

Nina Runa Essendrop's *Music Creatures*,

"I went to Sweden for a LARPing conference in September" is not something I would've been able to brag about until recently. There was so much to take in then that I have no photos or documentation of being there except for my plane tickets and a few videos of an organist practicing in a nearby church in Linköping. I hope I remember this conference when I'm older.

"Music Creatures is an immersive, poetic, physical larp. You will play the silent Music Creatures who move, breathe, communicate, and experience the world through music and sound. For many years they have secretly blended into human societies, but this night they have chosen to open up one of their secret meeting places to a few invited human guests. Experiencing the world using the logic of 'musicality.' Experiencing the vulnerability in revealing your non-human musical self to a 'normal' world".¹⁶

I learned about Nina R. Essendrop's work after attending a Nordic LARPing conference, Knutpunkt, in Linköping, Sweden, in September 2022. While participating in her LARP *Music Creatures*, I was allowed to be playful, improvise, and interact with others while non-verbal. Pre-LARP Nina asked us to find our characters for the first couple of hours of workshoping. We explored operating in our bodies as the character and how we move through sound and music DJ 'ed by Jonathan Goldsmith. Nina instructed us to assess how our creatures would react in different situations. We moved out into the hallways as creatures and eventually returned to our space to decorate and prepare for our special invited human guests who would join us in our café.

¹⁶ <https://knutpunkt.spelkonvent.se/event/14/>

The interactions between creatures and humans were exciting as neither group knew what the other had been up to before meeting (the humans had a much shorter pre-café introduction). We were given ribbons and cards that gave us a backstory. I was a janitor often seen by one human, and they eventually gave me a box of chocolates. To return their kindness, I invited them to join me in the café. My human was Emil, a Finnish web developer I had met earlier that morning in an improvising class at the conference. When he arrived, I decided I was a gentler, shyer creature who communicated much with my hands, mainly to dance. He played a more awkward version of himself, trying to speak with me until his human character realized I couldn't respond with words, only facial expressions and movements. I brought Emil around the room, introducing him to other creatures and offering him more water than he needed (humans were a new experience for my creature to think about caring for). At one point, when we were dancing, tears were streaming down Emil's face, which led the non-music creature/human IRL Olivia to be concerned for Emil. I led Emil over to a set of chairs to move away from the chaos and weird reality we had been LARPing in. When I felt assured that Emil could re-enter our LARPing reality, we went back to dancing and eventually ended our time together. We smiled a lot, hugged awkwardly (as I'm sure my character didn't really understand what a hug meant), and Emil left.

Nina had the humans reconnect with their musical creature friends to have a post-LARP discussion and see how everyone was doing. When I reconnected with Emil, we hugged, and I inquired about his feelings. Essentially, he was ok and had been overwhelmed by the feelings of what it **meant** to be human, which made him cry. He was expecting another child only a short time after the conference. It was exciting to share afterwards what we decided to do as part of our characters and what motivated us to act the way we did during our hour together in the musical creatures' café.

What impressed me about being in this space filled with LARPers was that most of the participants were not professional, full-time artists. They had day jobs, and this was their creative outlet. Safety was a big concern and topic of interest, depending on the context of the LARP. There were discussions on how best to express violence and gore creatively or in relation to safety. There were discussions about how to set your LARPers up for success pre-LARP and post-LARP. There were discussions on how to work

through taboo topics or topics that could trigger someone. The conference participants were so open in their conversations as they had experienced becoming characters with a lot of personal and emotional baggage in past LARPs.

I continue to question myself and check myself to ensure that I'm taking care of the people I collaborate with and can serve them and myself with the most care. It's not an easy balancing act, and I tend to lean more toward caring for others than myself. I am aware of this unbalance in my approach and know that I can't fully be present for others if I am not physically and emotionally caring for myself. I'm improving at asking for help and recognizing when I need help or assistance from others.

CHAPTER 5 – ishkwataa
s/he is at the end of an activity s/he stops an activity, stops working,
quits working, quits a job

AORTA - 2016

WRITTEN BY JEAN MARTIN, JESSE ZUBOT, TANYA TAGAQ

♪ WOLF GROWL, DRUMS, VIOLIN HARMONICS ♪

Thoughts post-opera:

It's now late April, and I'm working on a personal debrief for this document as well as myself. I'm already looking to the future and ready to move on with the project as I think about the discussion around repatriation needing to be louder and much more in people's minds than it currently is. The week before the opera workshop was incredibly draining for me, as it was for many students on Dartmouth's campus. Finding out that ancestors were still being used as part of osteology classes while I was on this land ripped through me; it felt like someone was pulling my insides out of me. Unfortunately, these episodes of trauma are reminders that the work is ongoing and that a lot is needed for the current and next generations to thrive.

This project was emotionally quite difficult, and it made me truly understand the need to have spiritual advisors, traditional community workers or mental health workers as part of the process. I took on a lot of the emotional labour of this project and didn't have an outlet to release the built-up energy. I am excited by the result of a week-long residency with students, professional artists, mentors, and collaborators that I brought up to Hanover (Alexandra Smither, Olivier Zerouali, Piper Hill, Samita Sinha, Mali Obomsawin, Joy Guidry, and Nikki Joshi). I learned a lot about what I want and need from this process as well as what my collaborators need. There needs to be enough money to pay to have the right people involved for the right amount of time in order to have space for processing and experimentation. I loved what we were able to accomplish. I wanted to take my libretto and work with the musicians on the music, asking them for sounds they wanted to offer in addition to the sounds I heard. We collaborated on finding the right sounds during the residency together. Because of how many hats I was wearing, I needed several outside eyes (literally), Samita Sinha and Julia Havard, to help keep the

structure intact so that the performers had space to play together in our blocks of time each day.

The institution was only as supportive as it allowed itself to be within its rules. We were only sometimes spoken to with a generous or kind tone. We were spoken to more often as people being monitored and under constant surveillance. When an institution chooses to be reactive rather than proactive, it shows me how much an organization or institution has thought previously about their power when working with Black, Brown, and Indigenous artists. I confused the hell out of some of the staff with my opera and brought up excitement for many others. I know there would be no way I would've gotten as far as I did without the help of the Indigenous staff or faculty (like Jami Powell and Bruce Duthu), who have long established the need for Indigenous representation on this campus. There was a lot of support from the undergraduate student population. It was exciting to hear from the undergraduate students who attended that they had been inspired to create their own interventions. I plan to continue this project by pitching it to several institutions (ex. Harvard, University of California Berkeley, and the rest of the top offenders across Turtle Island and worldwide - especially to the British as they have so many ancestors in their collection).

I suspect that my ancestors will let me know when the time is right to either retire this piece or move on from it. This work I've created situates itself into a space, absorbs the history and stories of the land, and reminds us of the spirits that might still be nearby. I want to see more cultural objects and ancestors go home. Repatriation is a complicated process: emotionally, financially, spiritually, and physically but this process is essential for our collective healing. Until the point where I'm told I should stop, I'll keep working on it and using it as a tool for healing.

CHAPTER 5 – ishkwataa
s/he is at the end of an activity s/he stops an activity, stops working,
quits working, quits a job



Figure 21 Memories that will live here in this document so I can find them later.

CHAPTER 5 – ishkwataa
s/he is at the end of an activity s/he stops an activity, stops working,
quits working, quits a job

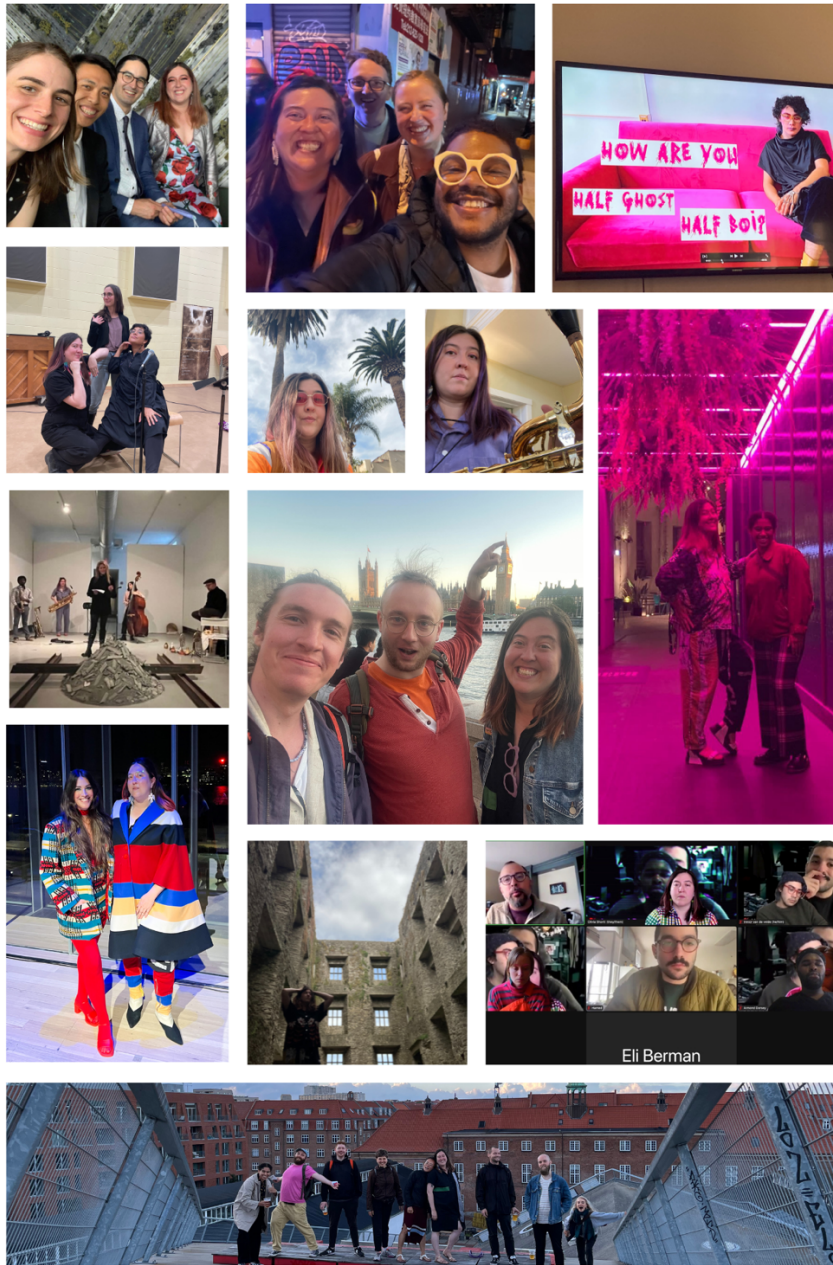


Figure 22 Beautiful moments, adventures, and friendships from the last two years

CHAPTER 5 – ishkwataa
s/he is at the end of an activity s/he stops an activity, stops working,
quits working, quits a job



Figure 23 Costumes and prop behind the scenes from the opera workshop

MUSEUM GUIDE, CREDITS, AND PROGRAM

Nina Boujee / Composer / Librettist / Co-Director / Costumes / Props / Video / Producer	Olivia Shortt
Tour Guide (Job)	Alexandra Smither
Tour Attendee (LI)	Olivier Zerouali
Chorus (Memory)	Charles Peoples III
Chorus (Echo)	Eli Berman
Bassoon	Joy Guidry
Viola	Mac Waters
Double Bass	Mali Obomsawin
Percussion	Nikki Joshi
Co-Director	Piper Hill
Stage Manager	Raegan Padula
Outside Eye	Samita Sinha
Outside Eye	Julia Havard
Dramaturg	Armond Dorsey
Costume Mentorship	Bethany Padron
Costume Assistance	Anna Winter
Recording Engineer	Rodrigo Martinez Torres
	Antônio Jorge Medeiros Batista Silva
	Trinity Harlan
	Madeleine Stewart
Docents	Nizhonie Denetsosie-Gomez
	Eliza Burke Erdrich
	Abigail Burgess
	Antônio Jorge Medeiros Batista Silva
Recorded Voices	Nizhonie Denetsosie-Gomez
	Eliza Burke Erdrich
NMF Producers	Taylor Ho Bynum, Bethany Young
	Sarah Friday
Drivers	Charles Peoples III
	McIntosh Bazile

Supported by:

- Dartmouth College
 - Dept of Art history
 - Dept of Studio Art
 - Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies
 - Digital Musics
 - Dept of Music
 - Digital Humanities
 - Native American and Indigenous Studies
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 - Black Sound Lab
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 - Leslie Center for the Arts
 - Alumni Research Award
- The development of The Museum of the Lost and Found: gaakaazootaadiwag received funding from OPERA America's IDEA Opera Grants program, supported by the Charles and Cerise Jacobs Charitable Foundation.

Figure 24 Program Credits, Opera Workshop April 8th, 2023 Hood Museum, Dartmouth College



HOW WILL YOU ENGAGE WITH YOUR MUSEUM?

Join us for tours by invitation-only. Participate in conversations with lost and found items trapped within our museum. Sometimes there are glitches in the system and occasionally a patron ends up giving more than they expected to. Donations are always accepted, voluntary or not. Don't wander the galleries. Connect with a friend over art at a reception. Enjoy a lunchtime gallery talk or special lecture. Experiment with art materials and discover new ways to think critically about art. Listen to live performances in a stunning setting. Become part of the museum.

Find more information about upcoming programs and events at www.olivia-shortt.com

ACCESSIBILITY

The north entrance and all floors of the museum are wheelchair accessible, and wheelchairs are available upon request. ALDs are available for museum programming with advance notice. Visitor services guides are also stationed throughout the galleries to assist guests.

PHOTOGRAPHY

We welcome visitors to photograph works of art owned by the Hood Museum of Art for personal use only. No flash, and please do not touch the works of art! Don't listen to what the art says, even if it seems real.

SHARE YOUR VISIT

#MuseumOfTheLostAndFound
@OliviaShortt
Wifi available through Dartmouth Public.

BECOME A FRIEND TODAY

The encouragement, contributions, and participation of our Friends help us enrich lives through art. Friends of the museum stay up-to-date on our programs and exhibitions, news, and events. It's free and easy to become a Friend: visit our museum and never leave!

Hours

Monday to Sunday, ∞

Open 24 hours a day, all day, every day, every hour on the hour

Free and open to everyone by invitation only

HOOD MUSEUM OF ART

Dartmouth College
6 East Wheelock Street
Hanover, New Hampshire 03755

(above) The north facade. (cover) In Engles Gallery looking out the vitrine window over the Dartmouth Green. Photographs © Michael Moran, stitched by Olive Shortt.

Figure 25 Museum Guide, Page One, Opera Workshop April 8th, 2023 Hood Museum, Dartmouth College

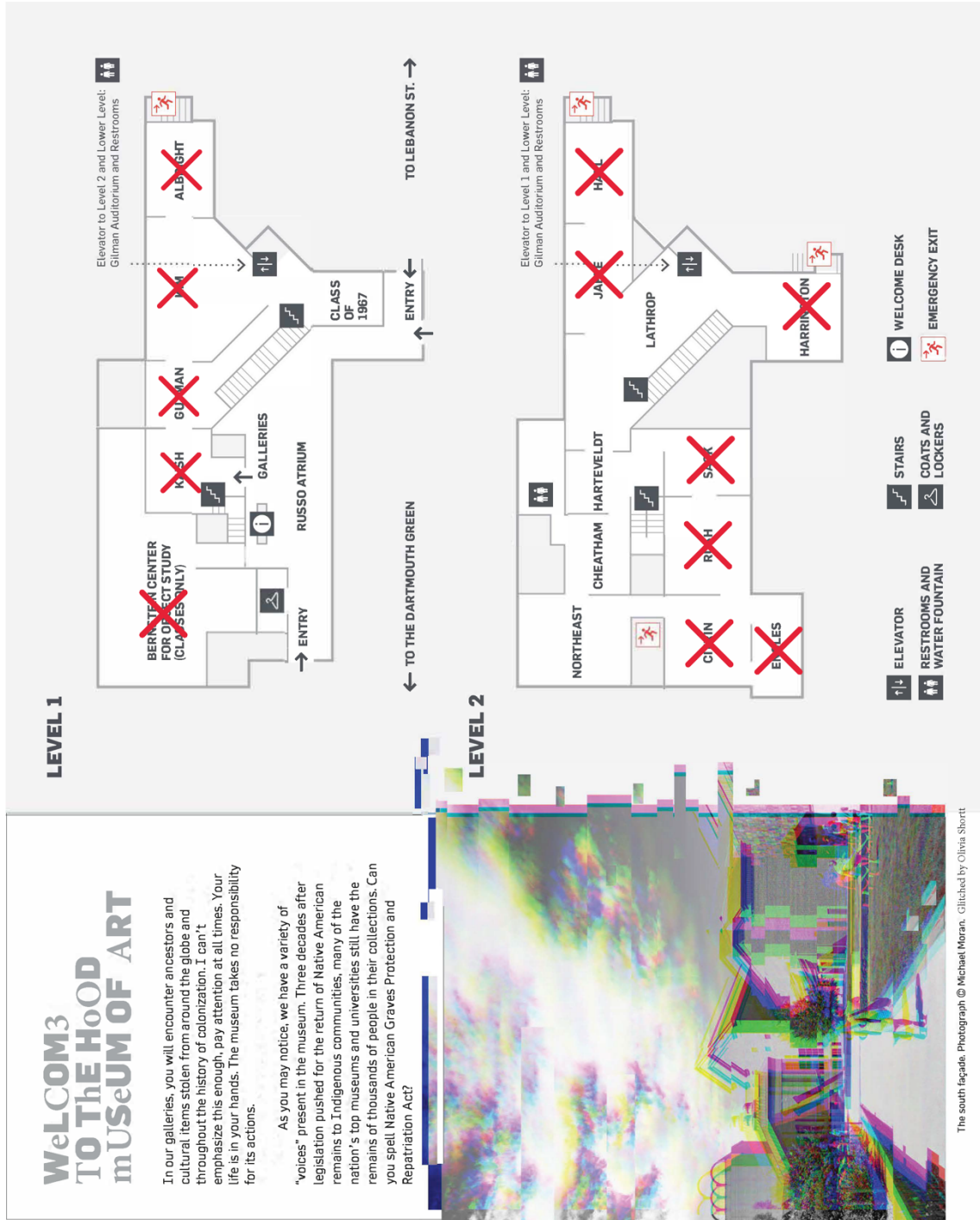


Figure 26 Museum Guide, Page Two, Opera Workshop April 8th, 2023 Hood Museum, Dartmouth College

LIBRETTO

The Museum of the Lost and Found
gaakaazootaadiwag
Text and Music by Olivia Shortt

PRESENTATION APRIL 8, 2023
DARTMOUTH COLLEGE NEW MUSIC FESTIVAL
HOOD MUSEUM

CHARACTERS

TOUR GUIDE - AKA Johanna Mary O'Sullivan (pronounced JOE-HANNAH), AKA Jo

- An elderly being, age unknown, with a hint of a rural accent or odd meter/rhythm to their speech pattern
- Speaks in a strange manner, unsettling, not on our side but also not really against us
- Not human, has no gender implied but could be gender-fluid
- Caretaker of the spirits trapped in the museum, chaotic neutral, our potentially untrustworthy guide, not your friend but not your enemy.

NINA BOUJEE

- A trickster character
- Lichtenstein-like makeup, two-faced, masculine and feminine and non-gendered elements
- Not a neutral voice and not a reassurance but also not against the audience. Cares for people and spirits but doesn't want to be vulnerable.
- May act as a conductor for the band

TOUR ATTENDEE - AKA Alice AKA Li (pronounced Lee)

- Our most normal ("normie") and only human character
- Works in an office and loves going to see shows, concerts and visiting museums
- Has some understanding of the issues in our current day and age but is still learning and growing as a person, curious about expanding their ways of thinking

CHORUS: MEMORY & ECHO (can be performed by one or more ensemble/chorus members)

- NOT A SINGLE BEING BUT RATHER A COLLECTION OF MEMORIES, ECHOES AND SHADOWS OF PREVIOUS PEOPLE
- They are seldom acknowledged by the Tour Guide or the Attendee
- Can be performed by one person or many representing each concept (echo and memory)
- Echo is the resonance bouncing off walls left behind by Memory
- Often sings more texturally and has a more improvised part, unsettling and weird both in character and in performed sounds.
- Lots of vocal repetition in the soundscape of this character and interpretation of it

BAND - INSTRUMENTS

- Ideally, around 4 performers of varying instruments (ex., Bassoon, viola, double bass, percussion)
- People who have been trapped in the museum for a very long time, unknown duration
- Often vocalize similarly to CHORUS, improvise and make weird textural sounds.

SETTING

A museum that looks like it was created by someone who enjoys surrealism, Lady Gaga and glitter. Many geometric shapes and block colours are integrated into the world around us (including the set and costumes). If you can't create your own world, use what is available to you in your specific

museum/gallery space and be inspired by the previous description. The walls are angular, and the lighting seems askew, as if the building was abandoned at one point.

PRE-SHOW

Static and incomprehensible voices are heard through Bluetooth speakers as the audience enters the space. While the audience enters, they check in at the main desk and get their name tag and museum guide (paper copy). The band is playing melodies from the opera. Echo and Memory are nearby, echoing text. Nina Boujee emerges and goes to the mic to prepare the audience for what lies ahead. We are first met with a trickster, Nina Boujee, who wants to let us in on a secret and offer guidance about our museum tour.

NINA:

Overconfident, spoken intro

Boozhoo. Hello, Aniin. Welcome to each and every person here with us today. Of course, you know who I am. Right? I'm Nina Boujee, sometimes known as Nanaboozhoo, for those of you who are in the know. I'm your chaotic trickster friend from the north to set up some ground rules and offer some warnings before our tour today, so listen up or don't.

How often do you hear land acknowledgements at any kind of event here at Dart Mouth? Our activities today make it incumbent upon us to consider the legacies of colonization and white supremacy embedded within the technologies, structures, and ways of thinking we use daily.

We recognize that we are here because this land was colonized. Indigenous communities and allies continue to struggle against the consequences of the colonial system. Today, Dartmouth College and the Hood Museum are located on the unceded lands of the Abenaki. Let's acknowledge and thank the Abenaki and all Indigenous people who share this land with us and allow us to be here as uninvited guests. We acknowledge them and any other Nations who care for the land (acknowledged and unacknowledged, recorded and unrecorded) as the land's past, present and future caretakers.

Dartmouth occupies unceded Abenaki land and allows for the erasure and distortion of the inconvenient parts of Dartmouth's history. Eleazar Wheelock, the man who accepted this land from the New Hampshire Governor to build Dartmouth, knew that the land was Abenaki land. One of his students, Samson Occom of the Mohegan Tribe, spent two years abroad raising seed money for the school, not knowing that the school would be built far from the community he'd hoped would benefit from it, let alone on unceded Abenaki land. While Dartmouth tries to paint their relationship as cordial, Occom disassociated himself from Wheelock early in the college's history. Not only that, but for its first 200 years, Dartmouth did little to benefit the local Indigenous communities it had displaced.

In a Dora the Explorer type-voice, Nina continues to speak:

Can you spell Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act?

Now Dartmouth still holds onto Indigenous remains and cultural items. How many cultural items and ancestors still sit in storage, calling out to go home? Listen carefully, you might hear them during the tour. "Three decades after legislation pushed for the return of Native American remains to Indigenous

communities, many of the nation's top museums and universities still have the remains of thousands of people in their collections”.

Let's take a moment to think about all of that. Do you feel uncomfortable? Would it upset you if your prized family possessions were stolen? How would it feel to have the earth below you uprooted and claimed by another? How would it feel not to know where the bodies of your grandparents rest or to have them hidden away in storage by an institution like Dartmouth, Harvard or the University of California Berkeley? What if they were mislabeled with a vague or partially inaccurate name tag, and that tag labelled them as being from the wrong place or country or didn't give enough clarity as to whom they belonged? Might make it hard to get them returned home correctly? Wouldn't it?

Nina makes loud sound. Clap, clap!

Once we start our tour of the museum, it will run for approximately 40 mins with no intermission. Should you need to leave for any reason, such as the restroom, please ask one of our docents, wearing their unique headpieces covered in red monarch butterflies, who will guide you away from the tour and bring you back, most likely.

Alright! Rules of the tour:

1. Don't touch the art, especially if you don't want to end up like the others left behind.
2. The museum has asked that you not use flash when taking photos and videos. Not only can the light from the flash harm the art you will see on tour, but it can also release something you aren't ready to allow back into our world. Do what you will with this information. I don't care if you're confused.
3. If you believe an item does not belong to the museum and should be repatriated to its original community, please note that repatriation is a long and painful bureaucratic process that can take anywhere from 5 to 300 years. Don't expect it to be straightforward. Don't expect it to happen within your lifetime unless you decide to do something about it. It's not a simple process and can cost a community more than just money. We love an emotional tax.
4. Your tour guide is not your friend. They aren't to be trusted, especially with your life. You should only trust the docents. If you need anything, please speak with a docent wearing red glasses and a headband covered in red butterflies.
5. There is one small elevator located in the museum. We will start on the ground floor and immediately go to the second floor. Should you require the elevator, please flag Echo; Echo, please wave to the people, who will take you, along with one of our docents, to the elevator and help you rejoin the group on the second floor.
6. Please stay with the group at all times, if possible. Do not wander off or get lost on the tour. I can't guarantee that your donation won't be rejected, as wandering souls are the number one cause of donation to the museum. Don't worry if you don't understand; you will eventually. We will be walking on the tour, and should you require a break, our docents point you to black foldable chairs that are near all of the exhibits we will be visiting.
7. You might see some other creatures with cameras, as they will be recording this tour of the museum for archival purposes. The band, tour guide and Echo and Memory can't see them, so

don't point them out; otherwise, you'll scare our friends in the museum who don't know they're being documented...for archival purposes, obviously.

8. Please, I can't emphasize this enough, pay attention at all times. I don't know how often I have to reiterate that predominantly white-led institutions love to keep personal, especially cultural items and the ancestors from communities that they have stolen from nations across the globe, especially Indigenous communities. Your life is in your hands. The museum takes no responsibility for its actions.

ACT I SCENE I

[introduction and our first exhibit]

NINA:

Do you hear that? It almost sounds likesomething I've heard before, familiar.....

An elderly being, age unknown, with a hint of a rural accent, shows up. If possible, in the venue, lighting or choreography focuses our attention on the Tour Guide. Tour Guide abruptly interrupts, walks over after hearing Nina's voice say, "Do you hear that?". The Tour Guide coughs or makes "ahem"-type sounds to get the audience's attention. Nina moves out of the way but continues to be present, watching and taking everything in. TG takes headset from Nina.

Turns on the headset in order to be heard. Fixes hair and clothing. Tour Guide fidgets with mic (ASMR).

TOUR GUIDE (TG):

Turn to the group, grumpy suddenly. Loudly singing monotone. Molto vibrato.

COULD I HAVE EVERYONE'S ATTENTION, PLEASE?

Instrumentalists stop after "please?"

*TG Character switch. SPOKEN in an upbeat manner.
(with ECHO following cadence and MEMORY echoing words/following consonants and making funny facial expressions, a foreshadowing of glitching/going haywire):*

Oh, hi there!

SUNG, bel canto.

Welcome to the Museum of the Lost and Found.
I'll be your tour guide for today.
My name is Johanna Mary O'Sullivan.

SPOKEN

but you can call me Jo.

SUNG

I've worked here at the museum for almost 30 years.
Make sure you're wearing your museum badges.
Now, come along,
I'm so happy that you've joined us on this tour of the museum.

Looks around the tour group to ensure everyone is paying attention. Continues speaking. Chipper. Echo and Memory stop vocal textures. SPOKEN:

Alright, now, make sure to stay with the tour,
or you might become part of the exhibit.

Looks to the side where band members are congregated in the lobby. They are the first exhibit. Hard dramatic switch between singing and spoken.

We're already at our first exhibit. If you look to your right,
you'll see the first artifact on the tour.

A band of musicians.

One might describe our first stop as

Lost spirits trying to go home?

Every tour is a little bit different, so stay focused, or we might lose you.

Maybe you'll become part of the museum as an exhibit.

*Tour Guide laughs, creepy, exaggerated non-socially accepted human laughter, cringey...
Echo and Memory stop when they hear laughing.*

SPOKEN

HAHAHA, I'm just joking. I think. Hopefully.
Follow me and stay close.

Band plays drones (harmonics) for a moment, audience watches. Tour Guide guides the tour inside the museum. Everyone follows.

Glitch sounds occur as we make our way in and towards the stairs. Sounds are emitted by performers, static sounds, repeated words and textural voicings. Repetition of gestures, broken. Tour Guide struggles to say one sentence, trying to say this phrase, something comes out, but it's repeated (vinyl needle stuck style) or focused on consonants, being mindful to sound more robotic and electronic in your glitch.

GLITCH

TG:

If you follow me this way // IF YOU FOLLOW ME THIS WAY

*Tour Guide guides the tour upstairs to Northeast Gallery in Hood Museum. Slow down as we get closer to
Gallery.
At top of stairs, walking*

Oh my, I don't think that was supposed to happen...

Probably just a glitch in the system.

I wouldn't worry about it.

ECHO, MEMORY, BAND ECHOING:

In unison-ish monotone sung and spoken voices. Repeat 3 ~ ish times. Starts quietly once you can see the red walls of the printmaking exhibit.

Red is the colour of the walls. Only the ancestors can see red.

Tour Guide continues moving through the museum pretending everything is normal and casually talking to the whole group, making small talk. Starting to sound more robotic and extreme by the third line.

SPOKEN

TG:

Now, have any of you ever worked in an office?
or customer service, or some job
where might you have a place in the backroom?

BAND, ECHO, MEMORY, TG, TOUR ATTENDEE, NINA:

In unison rhythm, forcefully spoken once you land in Northeast Gallery.

Together. Use the breath as a cue if needed.

Strings snap pizz, on lower strings in unison with voices

YOU. KNOW. WHAT. I. MEAN?

GLITCH

ECHO and MEMORY:

consonants on top, tttt, ffff,

TG:

A little annoyed at the interruptions. Goes back into the chipper character.

sung/spoken/recit-like but using big/wide intervals while singing.

CONTINUOUS AS IF YOU CAN'T STOP. *Over emphasize the bolded text.*

The Museum of The Lost and Found has been operating here **on this land**
on this land since time immemorial.

The **first person to leave**

first person to leave a footprint behind them **also left a small**

also left a small trinket - silver in colour, small in diameter and **would've gone**

would've gone unnoticed,

Slow down, almost to pause.

except

that the sun caught the item's reflection

EVERYONE:

In unison-ISH rhythm, creepily spoken, unsettling. Use the breath to unify the entrance. Together.
and attracted the eyes of a magpie.

ACT II:

[red plaid jacket and other trinkets]

TG:

Pauses. Starts to give information about the objects in front of us, the red plaid jacket.

This is a red plaid jacket.

Worn often by people who live in weather conditions that require snow tires, plugging your old car in at night and fearing the moment when Fahrenheit and Celsius become the same number.

I have collected so many items for this museum as a curator.

sung, reflective, looking back

I have collected many items here

Nina walks up behind the tour attendee and sings behind them.

NINA

I can remember sitting in the snow.

Tour Attendee takes over. SINGING several times alone.

TOUR ATTENDEE (LI):

SUNG

I can remember sitting in the snow.

I can remember sitting in the snow.

I can remember sitting in the snow.

I can remember sitting in the snow.

*Tour Attendee SINGING. CHORUS improvising with text.
Whisper-like sounds from band (and quiet fast runs), air, sssss*

ECHO/MEMORY:

*vocal texture, ongoing throughout singing
Moving through crowd, slowly.*

I can remember

I can remember

LI:

sung

out in the woods,

telling me stories

why the birch bark was white.

crisp cold air,

Leave the house at 6 am

Come home, come home.

spoken

nothing but the forest around us.

Red plaid jacket

Crisp cold air

Nothing

but the forest around us

Once Nina starts, everyone else except the tour attendee is frozen, eyes looking down or closed.

NINA:

Do you ever wonder what happens to those items in lost and found boxes? Have any of you ever worked in customer service? A lost and found box is like the world's most tragic scavenger hunt of black umbrellas, car keys and library books and random personal items you don't quite expect to see in there that you know will never go home. People are a little like that. There are so many stories that objects are waiting to tell. I have seen it all, as far as lost and found boxes go, but also just as far as humanity goes in regard to taking care of each other and respecting cultural practices or something like that.

Band and voices come in, at first quietly, with slow glisses, light and airy.

A huge shift in tone. From sarcastic to very low and neutral, almost hypnotic. Nina is walking around the audience. Light drones of ssss, static, shbbb (Echo and Memory and Attendee)

(one big, long audible breath)

Have you ever left a laptop at a conference in New Orleans and didn't realize until you had transferred to the next airport that it was missing, and you had to frantically text the only other person you knew at the conference and ask them to bring it back to Canada for fear it'd be lost forever? *(BIG slow exhale then another long inhale)* Hmm, me neither. Or maybe, you got on a bus at three in the morning to get to the airport in Melbourne, Australia, only to fall asleep at the gate and have your name called on the PA system so that you had to chaotically grab your things to get on your flight back to Sydney and not realize that you left your cell phone on the bench. Once in Sydney, you realize what you've done, so you force the customer service desk staff to help you speak to security and make friends with the Melbourne airport security guard who does everything in his power to try and get your phone back to you, but it ends up being the band that you met while in Sydney who bring your phone to some Nordic countries and later back to Canada. Hmmm, still no one in the room relating to this?

Nina returns to a sarcastic tone. Background sounds stop. Pacing around audience.

Well, imagine those feelings, but now stretch them over centuries or millennia. Does anyone here know what kinship means? K i n s h i p ? What if I said that your relationship with an object like a car is seen as more valuable than the relationships you have with your ancestors? I'm going to tell you a little secret. You don't get to mourn the dead, *(over emphasized and loud)* EVEN IF THEY'RE FAMILY, so museums are totally allowed to keep the bodies. For science, right? Museums must preserve the history of the natives and Indigenous peoples of this land because they're going extinct; otherwise, who will? Are we really going to blame colonization for the disappearance of Indigenous people's food sources and access to their own communities' resources? OMG. Museums, archeologists and anthropologists are SO SMART. What would we do without their help? They really have done so much good for Indigenous peoples' by stealing their cultural artifacts and ancestors and keeping them from their community for so long by preserving them in the back rooms of dark and scary museum spaces all over the world. So funny, right?

BAND, ECHO, MEMORY (with a southern twang), LI:

Layered and staggered, spoken text. Move around space independently around the crowd until settled and finish together. Tour Guide starts layered text section. Others follow after TG, with small variations in speed and approach to character, keeping it in a milder tone.

Magpies are known for stealing shiny things,
 Oh my, I don't think that was supposed to happen...
 Probably just a glitch in the system.
 but that is a lie and myth spread by weasels.
 Magpies are known for stealing shiny things,
 You can't trust weasels.
 You can't trust weasels.
 You can't trust weasels.
 but that is a lie and myth spread by weasels.
 Probably just a glitch in the system.
 but that is a lie and myth spread by weasels.
 You can't trust weasels.
 Probably just a glitch in the system.

Everyone (except Tour Attendee) says the last sentence and repeats several times as they hear it being repeated by Nina. Once the group is chanting this all together, Nina cues for them to stop, pausing. Slowly look around the room with wide eyes and relaxed faces.

The band members break the silence with weird instrumental textures (lip trills, quick short and sudden sounds), encouraging band and chorus to do the same for a brief period. Never get above a loud dynamic (no shrieking or screaming). Similar to a busy corner in a city but no spoken sounds, textural.

INSTRUMENTALISTS:

Layered, spoken text to transition out of the room, CHORUS and BAND repeat text in unordered layers. Walk and transition into Lathrop Gallery.

It's the place where we collect lost objects left behind by people.
 Some of those objects are never reclaimed.
 Some of those people are never reclaimed.
 It's the place where we collect lost people left behind by objects.

NINA:

There's something to be said about how we feel memories in our bodies. The way we listen to the songs that exist in our blood. Can you hear them? The ancestors calling?
(pretends to count on hands) Twenty-five voices, maybe more? Shhhhhhh. Listen.
Gestures to pay attention, interrupted by the Tour guide.

TG:

Irritated at the constant interruptions (band, Nina and the glitching)

NO ONE INVITED YOU HERE. WHY. ARE. YOU. LIKE THIS? Can you PLEASE stop. You don't know anything about how hard it is to take care of these precious artifacts. It's a lot of work to preserve these items and ensure they're available for others to see and learn from. There is no other museum in the world like ours and none that care as much as ours. These spirits are going to be here

forever. This museum will last the test of time. Get out. I'm tired of you ruining MY TOUR. I have spent FAR too long dealing with you and your politics.

*Nina sticks out tongue (or something childish like that) and leaves but lurks down the stairwell.
Tour guide switches back to perky voice and posture.*

Well, we've arrived at two of my favourite exhibits in the whole museum. Who doesn't love running shoes and turkey feathers? Now, you might be looking at the Rothko and the Kent Monkman nearby but let me tell you, the turkey feather and these old running shoes are the true gems of this establishment. We scour the globe for only the finest of lost and found boxes to procure these very items. Now, I must say that our team did collect these two precious objects fifty years ago so unfortunately, we don't know who they belonged to or much about them other than they're fun to look at. History isn't important; collecting is much more important. Fancy, right?

ECHO / MEMORY

mimicking TG

TG:

I'm one of the best collectors around, do you see this group of spirits? That's exactly what they are, spirits who will never go home. We have four ancestors right in front of you and none of them will ever go home. They have me, why would our dear spirits need anything else? A museum is just like a zoo, right? We need to be able to see what we want to see.

Instrumentalist starts melody, loops before ATTENDEE joins in

1. RUNNING (SHOES)

LI:

Leave the house at 6 am
Come home after everyone's asleep.
I didn't do sports because I loved them,
I did them to keep myself alive.
Running kept me alive.
Running meant you never had to go home.

An instrumentalist from a different corner of the room initiates a new melody (JERRY) as transition.

ECHO/MEMORY:

vocal texture x4 (2x times each)

Fa ske deux buh zhe
are vowels and sometimes *insert sounds here*
Are vowels and sometimes *insert sounds here*

JERRY - IMITATION TURKEY (TURKEY FEATHER)

Echo and Memory come up to the Tour Attendee and bark from either side of their head. Reminds them of something, a memory.

LI:
when the dogs were asleep
you'd hear barking
But no dogs in sight.
One turkey on the farm

Looking pleased with itself
It could mimic anything.
And it was LOUD.

FIDDLE INTERRUPTION

Improv that sounds kind of folk-ish, fiddle-tunes can be used.

I was an only child.
 One day I called out to him.

ECHO/MEMORY

(spongebob nasally, push it up into nose):

Jerry, Jerry, Where are you?
 He was nowhere to be found.

LI:
 He was nowhere to be found.

I went home
 Thinking Jerry had escaped.
 Finally, finally

When I came home, I asked my mother.
 What's for dinner?

ECHO/MEMORY:

Jer-ry

EVERYONE:

*Done in a canon-like start going down the stairs. Each singer takes their own speech pattern rhythms.
 Doesn't need to match others' speed but perform the text as your character.*

Do you ever get those headaches?
 where your memories are blurry or fuzzy
 or don't even feel like your own?
 It's as if you're looking at the television screen,
 but it has shifted into pixelated gray, white, and black specks.
 These specks overwhelm your vision,
 and you can't see anything but that.
 Sometimes it's all-consuming,
 but then you realize the green screen isn't working,
 and the real world keeps peeking through.

Memory is sometimes like that.

The past won't stop flickering in and out of present-day-you.
to the point where you know you're not ready
to look at the hole in the door.

Are you lost?
Who are you?
How did we get here?

Take me back.

The audience, tour guide and everyone else end up downstairs in the Gilman Auditorium. The lighting is starkly different than the mellow archival lighting of the museum, feral, angry, reds, purples.

RADIO IMPROV/GLITCH

Inside of the Gilman Auditorium.

Tour Guide is "tuning" the sounds of the other performers. Acting as if there are radio dials controlling them.

Radio static, tuning of the radio, random ads, improvise local ads and hosts from wherever you are performing, as it gets to the end become more chaotic, speed up and throw in other sounds like bird calls, change the emotional level to build intensity.

GLITCH

TG:

SPOKEN, MELODIC

Sometimes, there are glitches in the system,
and occasionally, a patron ends up giving more than they expected to.
Donations are always welcome, voluntary or not.

*Tour Attendee sense that the audience needs to get out of the museum. Something is wrong.
Nina screams in pain with the Tour Attendee.*

LI:

*Sung but generally monotone, dramatic baritone moment. Slowly moving around the space, interrupting the ongoing chaos of the radio. Looking around at the audience, genuinely asking them the question.
Absolute silence behind this part.*

What is going on? (X10 ~ish)

Haven't you looked around you at all?
Were you even listening?
Have you asked yourself how all of the objects got here?
We have to go home. We can't stay here any longer. Don't you understand?
If we don't leave now, we might never go home.

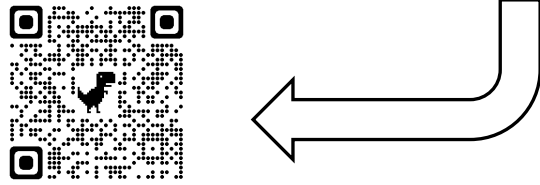
Follow me. Please. We have to leave. Follow Me.

*Video keeps playing and eventually goes into static.
The band starts to go and play, leaving the room. The crowd leaves the auditorium and ends up in the
atrium/lobby.*

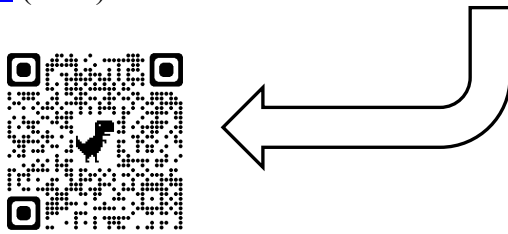
THE END

ARTISTIC PORTFOLIO LINKS:

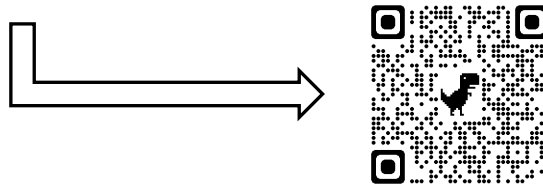
1. [Nina Boujee and Jeeves, unlikely friends at the end of the world](#) (2022)



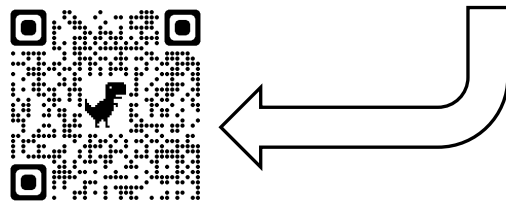
2. [Nina Boujee, Indigo and their Imaginary Friend presents: fiends, feelings and frolicking fish sticks](#) (2022)



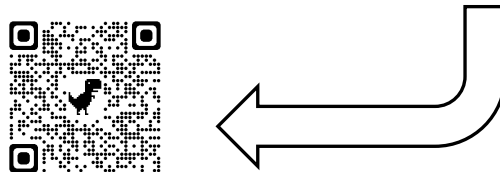
3. [New Music Festival Performance](#) (2022)



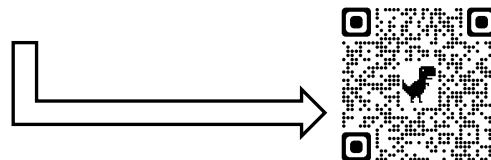
4. [send+receive Festival Performance](#) (2022)



5. [Your secrets are safe with me](#) – Danish New Music Academy Performance (2022)



6. [The Museum of the Lost and Found: gaakaazootaadiwag](#), trailer (2023)



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