

The Soulepper Academy presents...

THE 2023 *SHOWCASE*



AUGUST 3-4, 2023

Academy photos by Dahlia Katz

dear community



d'bi.young
anitafrika



Thank you for joining us as we culminate, celebrate and share our theatre journey with you. We have been engaged in a Decolonial Performance Praxis and Biomyth Making Module for the past six weeks using the Anitafrika Method. Decolonial Performance Praxis strives to disrupt the normative structures and conventions of performance by questioning the colonial assumptions and biases embedded in them. It includes the themes, narratives, and perspectives highlighted in performance and the methodologies and practices involved in creating performance. The course stands firmly at the confluence of storytelling, decolonial theory, and transformative processes of self and collective. Its central purpose is to redefine the contours of dramatic practice, steering it away from entrenched neocolonialist influences and reframing it within a decolonial, intersectional, oppression—and trauma-aware perspective.

The course is guided by the Anitafrika Method, embracing the Ubuntu philosophy of interconnectedness—I am because you are/I am because we are. This method prioritises self-actualisation, creative expression, and community embodiment, forming the core of the practice. Developed over fifteen years and central to my PhD research, the Anitafrika Method is a transformative decolonising approach to performance and pedagogy. I began working on the framework to systemise the socio-political consciousness that was inherent in the theatre training I received from my mother Anita Stewart and other Black womxn theatre mentors such as Amah Harris of Theatre in the Rough, ahdri zhina mandiola of b current theatre, Djanet Sears of AfriCanadian Playwright's Festival and Alison Sealy-Smith of Obsidian Theatre. Inspired by my mother's drama school thesis—Dubbin Theatre, and grounded in Black feminist thought, the method aims to transform how theatre and performance practitioners are trained as theatre makers, how they understand their craft and its impact on society.

The culmination of this module is the creation of Biomyths, a form of performative work which melds aspects of personal biography, mythology, and story into a unique narrative, allowing the artist to deeply explore and express their individual and collective experiences. It calls for a reflexive, critical, and imaginative engagement with personal hxrstories, mythologies and social consciousness. This holistic approach challenges artists to channel their creativity, personal experience, and societal insights into a transformative work that fosters self-expression, collective understanding, and connection.

To Theresa, Ziska, Charlotte, Durae and Landon. You are each uniquely and profoundly courageous! Thank you for mentoring me in the ways of living over these past six weeks. Thank you also for reminding me of the boundless possibilities of being humxn. To Marcia, Aneesa, Abby, Rohan, Kayla, James and Brett, your presence and creative collaboration was invaluable in this process. Thank you for your generosity and brilliance. To Djanet Sears, thank you for your sage wisdom and guidance now and throughout the years. To Adam Paolozza thank you for expanding our innerstanding of mask work and puppetry. To my mother Anita, my sons Moon and Phoenix, and my brother Johari, thank you for being my family. And to Weyni Mengesha, your vision is radiant! Ase Ancestors, Orishas, Spirit Guides, and Mentors.

In kindness

d'bi.young anitafrika

Lead Faculty & Curriculum Designer

Decolonial Performance Praxis & Biomyth Monodrama Making Using the Anitafrika Method



About *The Academy*

The **Soulpepper Academy** aims to develop highly skilled theatre artists who are equipped to make significant contributions in rehearsal halls and to the cultural landscape of Canada. Since the program's return in 2021 under the guidance of Artistic Director Weyni Mengesha, new and returning faculty members have included some of Canada's leading artists: d'bi.young anitafrika, Ins Choi, Kim Collier, Ravi Jain, Gregory Prest, Lorenzo Savoini, and Guillermo Verdecchia, who have helped Academy artists develop their artistic voice with original creations throughout the 26-week paid training program. The Academy curriculum is taught through rehearsals, classes, studio intensives, and workshops, aimed to enrich the thinking and practice of the individual artist while developing strong, responsible, and skilled collaborators in an ensemble setting.

The members of this year's Academy were chosen through a rigorous selection process that focused on their skills as performer-creators who are invested in collaborative theatre-making as a pillar of their practice. These five dynamic artists are exploring artistic questions relevant to their practice, innovating together, and are poised to make meaningful contributions to the vitality of Soulpepper and to the future of the national theatre ecology. In their applications, each expressed reflections on wanting to grow, learn, and create in this particular moment of time, and a desire to change the industry with their inimitable perspectives – to think, and listen, and tell vital stories for a more vibrant future.

"As an Academy Graduate myself it has been so meaningful to work with the Academy these past few years. To watch them take risks and hone in on skills they had not had the chance to explore. It only reinforced my belief in the importance of a program like this, to ensure the next generation's voices are supported and amplified" said **Weyni Mengesha**, Artistic Director. *"These five new Academy members are exceptional artists whose curiosity and bold creativity will help us shape the future of the company. I have already witnessed the tremendous growth of these artists and I can't wait for audiences to see their work."*

Soulpepper would like to acknowledge that Landon Krentz has made a significant contribution to the Soulpepper Academy and has played a vital role in establishing resources for ASL/ENG interpretations and more within the program.



The Evening's Schedule!

LANDON KRENTZ

The Confidence of a Deaf Queer Human

THERESA CUTKNIFE

*Ritual Release of Ancestral Rage OR
Let's Go Camping*

ZISKA LOUIS

Things I'm not Brave Enough to Say

INTERMISSION

CHARLOTTE DENNIS *An Experiment for Living a life*

DURAE MCFARLANE *Fractured*

TALKBACK

Credits

STORYTELLERS, COLLABORATORS, & CAST

Theresa Cutknife • Charlotte Dennis • Landon Krentz • Ziska Louis • Durae McFarlane

FACULTY, DIRECTOR & DRAMATURG

d'bi.young anitafrika

CREATIVE TEAM

STAGE MANAGER

Kayla Thomas

ASL/ENG INTERPRETATION TEAM

Marcia Adolphe • Aneesa Mustafa

LIGHTING DESIGN TEAM

d'bi.young anitafrika • Theresa Cutknife • Charlotte Dennis • Landon Krentz
Ziska Louis • Durae McFarlane • Kayla Thomas

LIGHTING TECHNICIAN

James McQuay

SOUND TECHNICIAN

Brett Brocoy

GUEST INSTRUCTORS

Djanet Sears • Adam Paolozza

SOULPEPPER TEAM

ADMINISTRATION

Weyni Mengesha - Artistic Director & Faculty
Gideon Arthurs - Executive Director
Rohan Kulkarni - Director of Education & Community Engagement
Abby Esteireiro - Academy Administrator
Luke Reece - Associate Artistic Director
Savannah Munro - City Youth Academy Program Assistant
Ahlam Hassan - Education Coordinator
Jacqui Arntfield - Community Activator

PRODUCTION

Julia Carrano - Assistant Production Manager
Rhett Costin - Assistant Technical Director
Nick Beardsley - Assistant Technical Director
Julian Bulof - Technical Director
Jasmine Knox - Senior Production Manager

Special thanks to all Soulpepper and Young Centre staff for their support of the Soulpepper Academy.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Savannah Munro

House and Stage technicians employed by the Young Centre for the Performing Arts are represented by Local 58 of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees.

Landon Krentz



Landon Krentz has been a Deaf theatre creator since 2016 on an incredible journey to decolonising theatre as an artist. He looks to reclaim the narratives of Deaf culture. To challenge the dominant hearing perspectives and highlight the richness of Deaf experiences.

Through his artistic practice, he aims to create stories free from the influence of audism and oppressive hearing norms. The work he is doing addresses the power dynamic between sign languages and spoken language in his artistic endeavours. To challenge the notion that spoken languages are superior or more valid than sign languages. His work promotes the idea that sign and spoken languages are equal in their expressive capacities and can coexist harmoniously in the same artistic space. As a culturally and linguistically Deaf individual, Landon's advocacy centres around championing language rights as a fundamental human right in Canada, where legal protection to safeguard against language deprivation is currently absent.

Landon Krentz
Artistic Director and Performer

The Confidence of a Deaf Queer Human

by Landon Krentz

Characters:

Andro (ASL)	Landon Krentz
The Love Interest (ENG)	Durae McFarlane
The True Love (ENG)	Charlotte Dennis
Angular Fish (Physical Theatre)	Ziska Louis
Swan (Physical Theatre)	Charlotte Dennis
Jellyfish (Physical Theatre)	Theresa Cutknife
The Bell (ENG)	Theresa Cutknife

Andro is ASL fluent and is Deaf queer any multiple identities. The Deaf queer actor chooses their acting partner based on their own attraction of their gender and sexuality. Modify the character to the actors' identity as they wish.

Collaborators

*d'bi.young anitafrika • Durae McFarlane • Ziska Louis
Theresa Cutknife • Charlotte Dennis*

Special Thanks

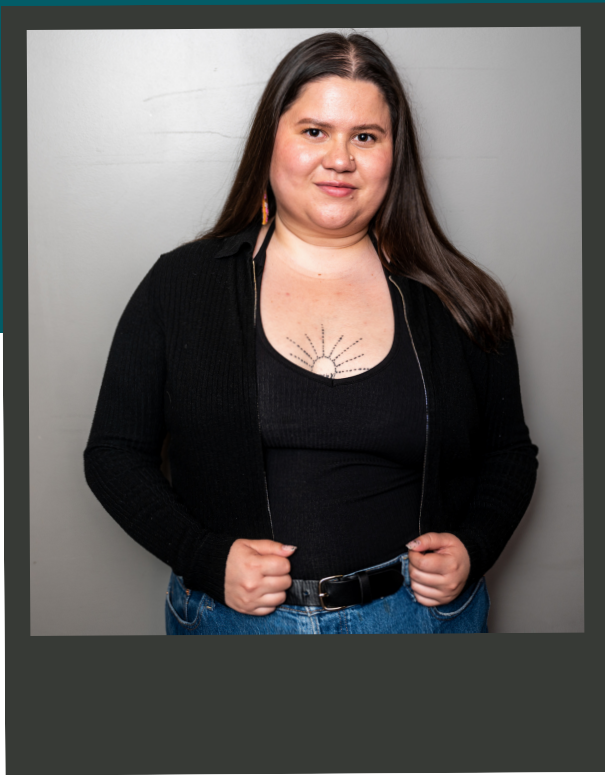
*Weyni Mengesha • Rohan Kulkarni • Abby Esteireiro
Marcia Adolphe • Aneesa Mustafa • Inside Out Theatre*

Inspired By

*Steve Niven • Brian Berlinski DQMO (Deaf Queer Men Only)
Ebony R Gooden • Eric Rose (Ghost River Theatre)*

Past Sign Language Arts Teachers / Mentors

*Debbie Rennie • Jamila and Amina Ouhid
Mindy Drapsa (Riksteatern Crea) • Alexandria Wailes
Monique Holt • Mustafa Alabssi • Joanne Webber
Sage Lovell • Elizabeth Morris • Jennifer Manning
Festival Clin d'Oeil*



Theresa Cutknife

Tânisi, nitisiyihkâson Theresa Cutknife. I am a member of the Samson Cree Nation located on Treaty 6 Territory in Maskwacis, Alberta. I am a Fat, Mixed, Queer, Nehiyaw & Puerto Rican Woman Arts Practitioner of Theatre, Movement, Playwriting, Poetry, Storytelling, Puppetry, and Arts Education. Since making Tkaronto my home in 2016, I've been driven by a profound curiosity and a deep inner need to learn, play, and share the myriad stories within me.

Honouring the rich tapestry of my Indigenous culture, the intricate intersections of my identities, and the relentless pursuit of liberation for myself and my people is urgent and sacred in my art and art-making process. My creative core is firmly rooted in Indigenous Storytelling, a tradition that shapes my art and makes me accountable to the diverse communities and intersectionalities I inhabit. I am committed to those who stoke the fires of change, nurturing the passions, dreams, and imaginations of all the untold stories within me.

Decolonising means actively deconstructing the status quo, constantly questioning, and recentering intersectionally and communally. It means practising power with others rather than exerting power over them.

My responsibility as an artist and human being is grounded in integrity and humility. I strive to avoid causing harm with my art and actions and to take accountability if I do, regardless of my intentions. I am committed to continuously uncovering and transforming my internal biases and to seeking help when needed. My community is both my responsibility and my inspiration. They are integral to my art-making process, for I cannot create in a vacuum. Every story I tell and idea I generate has roots tied to someone besides myself, and I must acknowledge and honour those connections.

Success, for me, is standing firm in my Core Values. It is finding joy in life and expressing that joy through my art.

Ritual Release of Ancestral Rage OR Let's Go Camping

a Theresa Cutknife imagining

Synopsis

An unnamed woman moves through her journey of Ancestral Rage, set in a liminal space not fully of the spirit world and not completely of our world. Rage and anger do not need to be repressed or left to fester in our bones to rot us. Rage and anger can be transformed into fire and fuel for our lives.

Production

Ritual Release of Ancestral Rage OR Let's Go Camping was first developed and presented at Soulpepper Theatre Academy 2023 in the Decolonial Performance Praxis & Bio Myth Making Module, using the Anitafrika Method:

*Creator-Storyteller
Faculty Dramaturge-Director
Set, Costumes*

*Theresa Cutknife
d'bi.young anitafrika
Theresa Cutknife*

Acknowledgements

Kinanâskomitin to d'bi.young anitafrika for your fierce support and guidance throughout this process and for the reminder to stand in my power and not abandon myself.

Hiy Hiy to Charlotte Dennis, Landon Krentz, Durae McFarlane, and Ziska Louis. I could not imagine doing this process without all of your care, compassion, laughter, leadership, hugs, and curiosity. How lucky I am to witness your greatness through this transformational time. Thank you to Marcia and Aneesa for your patience and presence with us all and for learning alongside us.

Thank you to Samantha Fraughton, my Kiciwamanawak and creative soulmate. Miigwetch to Yolanda Bonnell for answering my calls, for always cheering me on, for your leadership, and for your laughter my friend, sister, and mentor.

Thank you Weyni, Rohan, Abby, Luke, and everyone at Soulpepper for this life-changing opportunity and for bringing us all together.

Kinanâskomitin to the Ancestors. I carry you all in my blood, in my lungs, and in my heart.

Ziska Louis

My name is Ziska Louis, a trans-masc, queer, non-binary multidisciplinary performance artist who uses he/him pronouns. Born in Switzerland, raised in Wales, and currently residing in Tkaronto, I am a woven tapestry of diverse experiences that fuels my creative expression as an actor, musician, poet, and physical theatre performer.



I choose to be present and engaged in these urgent times, contributing to the much-needed global change. Authenticity, truth, and love are not just values I uphold; they are the core tenets that guide my every artistic endeavour. For me, the value of one human being is one human being, a principle that profoundly influences how I approach my work and interactions with others.

My artistry is a journey of continuous self-discovery, an exploration of pain, trauma, and healing. It is a space where the liminal becomes tangible, where the obscured facets of human experience find voice and visibility. An insatiable curiosity about humans and all aspects of the human experience drives me. This fuels my determination to challenge a colonised society that erases entire people, places, and things.

This curiosity is not merely intellectual; it's a burning passion that demands I show up repeatedly, no matter the obstacles or the cost. My work responds to that call, a series of artistic expressions reflecting the individual and collective journey towards understanding, acceptance, and healing.

I believe in healing – for myself, others, and the world. Healing is a process, often challenging and painful but always rewarding. It's a path that requires courage, compassion, and connection. I believe we all can heal, and I believe my art can be a catalyst in that profound and beautiful process.

Things I'm Not Brave Enough to Say

by Ziska Louis

Synopsis

Percy is at the gym. He's a recovering addict, relapsing. He's not sure yet why. He attempts to begin sorting something. He's not sure what yet. This inner poem runs through Percy's blood.

Trigger Warning

This play deals with themes of addiction, suicide, sexual abuse, eating disorders, violence, transphobia, racism, sexism. Other topics may activate feelings and emotions. Stay safe, if you need to step out, please do. Look after yourself.

Production

Things I'm Not Brave Enough To Say began development at Souleppper Theatre Academy in August 2023. d'bi young anitafrika led the Decolonial Performance Praxis & Biomyth Making Module providing practitioners with the gift of creation through the principles of the Anitafrika Method. Following is the cast and creative team:

HST Theresa Cutknife, Charlotte Dennis, Durae McFarlane

Fenty Theresa Cutknife

Lex Landon Krentz

Percy Ziska Louis

Pam Durae McFarlane

Director/Dramaturg d'bi young anitafrika

Set, Costumes Ziska Louis

Percy - Perception & Lex - Reflection. They are separate parts of the same whole.

Percy is spoken English, Lex is ASL.

HST - He/She/They, they are one but they are never fully one.

Fenty - Fentanyl, Pam - Diazepam.

Acknowledgement. Inspiration. Gratitude.

d'bi. young anitafrika, the heart and soul in the current growth of my heart and soul.

Theresa, Charlotte, Landon, Durae for your space and warmth, for your gentle souls. For what goes on in the rooms that only we know. For who you are.

Souleppper for this opportunity to nourish, nurture, expand and grow and the artistic safety they have gifted me. Abby, Weyni, Rohan, Luke, Paul, Jacqui, Melanie and the entire production team and crew. Marcia & Aneesa.

Mum. Dad. Steph. Bean. Scoob. Ry. The blood circulating in my being.

Everything, everywhere, all at once.

Taija - Do I want to fuck a volcano. At Factory TEP's 2023 cohort.



Charlotte Dennis

My name is Charlotte Dennis. I am an actor, writer, sober life-liver, emotion experiencer, and one who moves within a body in space with others for joy. I engage in an art practice that explores big feelings and sensitivity, serving as a connective tissue that unites us. This shame salve/creative practice comprises equal parts truth-telling, vulnerability, and loud laughing (or crying depending on the day).

I find myself drawn to the mundane daily experiences that embody universal truths in a world that has often narrowed the definition of what it means to be human. Theatre for me is about honesty, and it manifests in many forms. With the right support, anyone can be honest, and my aspiration is to foster supportive, radically honest, and deeply compassionate spaces.

My vision of theatre involves sharing power, allowing room for substantial questions, and opening up to even more extensive listening. Guided by tenderness and joy, I embrace what might be frightening but offers growth. My sense of success transcends material achievements. I increasingly believe there is no version of success without internal peace. That success may look less like a tv show, house, bank account, and more like a community, kindness, bravery, and permission to be still.

Being a practitioner means always being in practice, practising showing up (even when not showered or sore in the heart). As a practitioner, I'm continually in practice. Practising means using falling into old habits or retelling old narratives as an opportunity to return to our core values and have a very honest talk with ourselves and our community. When I lose my way, I find guidance in the Ubuntu philosophy, uttered to me by d'bi.young: 'I am because you are. I am because we are.'

Theatre is a revolution, a responsibility, a remedy, and a romance (on a good day).

An Experiment in Living a Life

By Charlotte Dennis

Synopsis

An Experiment in Living a Life follows HER as she navigates loneliness and her life in the silence of a one-bedroom apartment. It is an embodied exploration of taking up space in a life that feels insignificant. Poetry moves its way through her screens but never settles on her skin. It is a quiet night, it is concentrated avoidance and it is very very tender.

Production

An Experiment in Living a Life was first developed and presented at Soulpepper Theatre Academy in August 2023 in the Decolonial Performance Praxis & Biomyth Making Module, using the Anitafrika Method with the following cast and creative team:

*HER Charlotte Dennis
Creator Charlotte Dennis
Director/Dramaturg d'bi young anitafrika
Set, Costumes Charlotte Dennis*

Dedication

For the stormy feelers and midnight eaters. The alone-at-home, I'll deal-with-it-tomorrow, maybe-one-day-or-maybe-in-the-morning, late night-aching, self-soothing wild and solitary souls. I feel you.

Acknowledgement. Inspiration. Gratitude.

A very special thank you to my fearless, perceptive and wide-open collaborator d'bi.young. Thank you to my patient idea flints and flame fanners who congregated in studios on hot afternoons: Ziska Louis, Theresa Cutknife, Durae McFarlane and Landon Krentz. Thank you to Abby, Soulpepper, Weyni, Rohan, Kayla and the whole, tireless production team. A heap of deep gratitude to my most gentle witnesser, Eliza Bulchak-Healy. A most loving thank you to my storm soothers, Oliver and Deb. And a special thank you to Eva, Cara and Moe. This experiment would not have been possible without you.

Durae McFarlane



My name is Durae McFarlane, a gay Black actor, writer, and creator. I have chosen to devote myself to the arts because, as a child, stories made me feel seen, helping me to understand myself and the world around me. As I have grown, telling stories has become my path to liberation, a way to work through my challenges, heal, and hopefully initiate healing for those who engage with my work.

What is urgent and sacred in my art and art-making practice is the upliftment of Black queer folks. It's about centring our narratives and ensuring our stories are heard and celebrated.

To decolonise, both in art and life means constantly questioning the origins and intentions of my thoughts and stories. It means recognising the pervasive influence of colonial conditioning and striving to create art that embodies a power-with model. This awareness of living in a colonised society compels me to continually examine the stories I tell myself and others, ensuring they align with my core values.

In navigating this, I look inward, questioning the purpose of my work and its alignment with my core values. I'm conscious of the communities my pieces communicate with and the potential impact on them. Aware of the power I hold, I recognise my responsibility and accountability to my community, knowing that it's possible to cause harm even with the best intentions.

Integrity, for me, is about wholeness and alignment with my core values. It means making decisions that don't divide me from within but affirm my values, even if that means sacrificing potential gains.

Accountability and responsibility stem from understanding my power and ability to uplift or harm others. This awareness informs my actions, making me conscious of my choices and their effects on others, allowing me to work towards repairing and healing any harm without defensiveness.

My journey of self-actualisation has been complex and confronting but also enlightening. It has enabled me to examine my life, recognise the patterns related to my trauma, and gently build habits that support and safeguard me.

In my art, you will find reflections of these truths, expressions of my identity, and echoes of my journey. You'll find stories celebrating the Black queer experience, pieces striving for integrity, responsibility, and community engagement. My art is a mirror reflecting who I am and a window into a world that strives for understanding, healing, and liberation.

Fractured

by Durae McFarlane

Synopsis

Fractured follows the story of Cedrick as he starts to unravel how shame has impacted his life and the various moments that shame has been placed onto him through his upbringing, society, and how he has internalised shame.

Production

Fractured was first developed and presented at the Soulpepper Theatre Academy in August of 2023 in the Decolonial Performance Praxis & Biomyth Module, using the Anitafrika Method

Creator/Performer
Faculty Dramaturge/Director
Set/Costumes/Sound

Durae McFarlane
d'bi.young antiafrika
Durae McFarlane

Acknowledgement

So much gratitude and love to d'bi.young anitafrika for leading this 6-week process, it's been a truly life-affirming time. I have so much love for my fellow academy members: Charlotte Dennis, Theresa Cutknife, Ziska Louis, and Landon Krentz. For their patience and contributions to my process. Charlotte for helping put my play in a structure that felt right. Theresa for voicing the myth. Ziska for all the laughs throughout. Landon for his insight and guidance on the multitude of ways that this piece can be more accessible to a broader audience. And Marcia and Aneesa for allowing me to communicate with Landon. So much thanks to BBFA: Emerjade Simms, J.d. Leslie, Jamar Adams-Thompson, and Alicia Plummer. We were the only black students at a particular theatre school at the time. And since then, they have been artists I've leaned on for physical and emotional support. Y'all are real ones. You're my family. I love you endlessly.

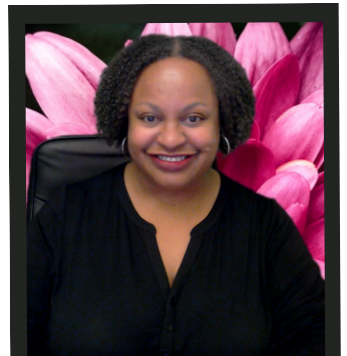
BIOS



*d'bi.young
anitafrika*

d'bi.young anitafrika, a nonbinary African-Xaymacan-Tkarontonian playwright-performer, scholar, and activist, champions liberatory art practices. A three-time Dora Award winner, renowned for their contributions to theatre and performance, anitafrika's artist-activist-educator work extends globally. Their PhD research advances the Anitafrika Method, a Black-queer-feminist paradigm. For two decades, anitafrika has produced works, pioneered a decolonial framework, and cultivated artist-development initiatives for practitioners worldwide such as Watah Theatre and Spolrusie Press. Their latest role in Trey Anthony's 'da kink in my hair earned a Dora nomination. anitafrika is currently curating Anita Stewart's (their mother) anthology of dub poetry and theatre, authoring a monograph on Black womxn's theatre in Canada, and spearheading the Ubuntu! Decolonial Arts Centre in Costa Rica. The Souleppper Academy has provided d'bi,young with a space to collectively cultivate magic, joy, and transformational growth in circle with Theresa, Ziska, Charlotte, Durae, Landon, Marcia and Aneesa. Ase Ancestors.

Marcia Adolphe (she/her) is a Toronto-based American Sign Language-English Interpreter with a solid 28 years of experience. She is one of the few Canadian interpreters to have attended the Interpreting for the Theatre Program at Juilliard.

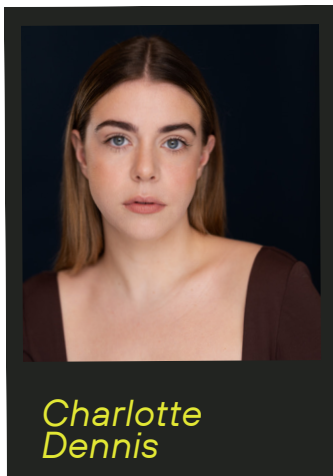


*Marcia
Adolphe*



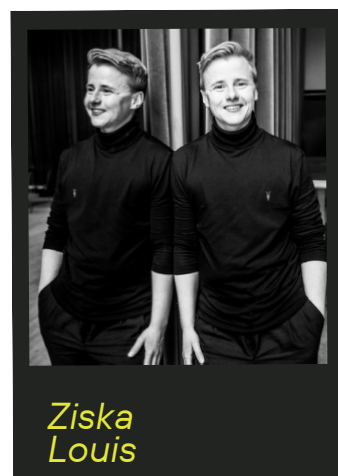
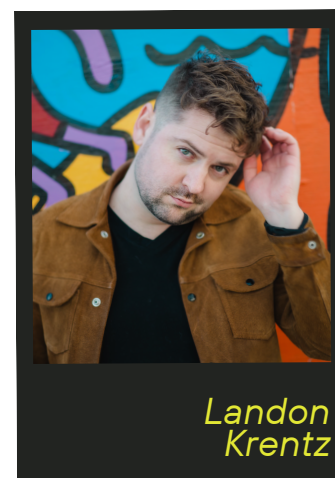
*Theresa
Cutknife*

Theresa Cutknife (she/her) is a Nehiyaw and Puerto Rican actor and writer from Maskwacîs, Alberta located on Treaty 6 Territory and she is a member of the Samson Cree Nation. She is a graduate from The Centre for Indigenous Theatre's full time acting program. Her most recent credits: Niizh (Native Earth Performing Arts), My Sister's Rage (Tarragon Theatre/Studio 180 Theatre/TOLive), The House of Bernarda Alba (Aluna Theatre/Modern Times Theatre), Diggstown (CBC Gem).



Charlotte Dennis is an actor, writer and on deep dark nights, a mover of furniture in an apartment that is too small for the amount of stuff it has collected. She is a graduate of the acting program at The National Theatre School of Canada. Recent credits include: What Rough Beast (Centaur Theatre); Martyr (ARC); Boston Marriage (Headstrong Collective); Dimples (Smock Alley Theatre, Dublin) Film/TV include: Murdoch Mysteries (S17); Forever Young; Alex & Isla (MayDay Pictures). Charlotte is profoundly grateful for this opportunity to be a part of the 2023 Soulpepper Academy with this very special group of people.

Landon Krentz, a Deaf performing artist from Saskatchewan, Canada, found his passion for theatre later in life when he was introduced to sign language. He quickly became a prominent figure in the Canadian arts scene, experimenting with different forms such as ASL opera, visual stories with music, and bi-lingual (ASL/ENG) plays. Krentz is recognized for his innovative approach to performance, using a unique blend of physicality, visual language, and sign language to captivate audiences of both Deaf and hearing communities. Krentz has overcome numerous obstacles to build an equal and shared theatrical experience for Deaf and hearing audiences, who are often limited to partial experiences through reliance on ASL interpretation. Despite these challenges, Krentz remains a persevering and influential force in the performing arts.



Ziska Louis is an actor, musician and physical theatre artist, originally from Switzerland, raised in Wales. Ziska began performing with the National Youth Theatre of Wales, going on to graduate from Manchester School of Theatre. Ziska is grateful and excited to have the opportunity to be part of Soulpepper's Academy. Canadian credits include: TEPS 2023 Cohort (Factory Theatre); The Darkest Dark (YPT); Russell's World (YPT).



*Durae
McFarlane*

Durae McFarlane is a queer Jamaican-Canadian actor and writer. He is a Dora nominated actor, and was named a breakthrough artist by Now Magazine in 2019. He was also a part of Cahoots Theatre's Hot House Playwrights Unit (2021). Recent credits include: Jane (Greenhouse Festival/Tarragon Theatre), The Foot Doctor (Choripán Theatre), Sincerely, Sincerity ((Stage Reading) Obsidian Theatre), Lone Island Lovers (Common Boots Theatre) and The Flick (Outside the March & Crow's Theatre).

Aneesa Mustafa has an Honours Bachelors of Interpretation (American Sign Language - English), is conversant in 6 languages, and specializes in theatre and community interpreting.



*Aneesa
Mustafa*



*Kayla
Thomas*

Kayla Thomas is a Toronto based, British Columbia raised theatre artist, with a passion to grow in her art & career in stage management. She hopes to make her mark in Toronto, specifically with impactful entertainment that embraces unity in sharing stories. She would like to thank her incredible mentors that offer endless support, as well as Souleppper for providing the opportunity to work with such incredible artists.

Support for the Soulpepper Academy

THE SOULPEPPER ACADEMY IS SUPPORTED BY RBC EMERGING ARTISTS PROJECT, AND THE GENEROSITY OF SYLVIA SOYKA, KINGFISHER FOUNDATION, AND CANADA ARTS TRAINING FUND. WE ARE ALSO GRATEFUL TO CANADA COUNCIL FOR THE ARTS FOR THEIR SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS ACCESSIBILITY SUPPORT IN THE 2023 ACADEMY. THANK YOU!

LEAD SUPPORT FOR THE SOULPEPPER ACADEMY



ADDITIONAL SUPPORT FOR THE SOULPEPPER ACADEMY

Sylvia Soyka

Kingfisher
Foundation

Canada 

The Norman & Margaret Jewison
Charitable Foundation



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada