



FTA expands horizons
with more exciting shows

Description

This is the last week to dive into theatrical universes from here and elsewhere

By Jacqueline van de Geer

June 6, 2022

The **Festival TransAmériques** returned this year with lots of surprising shows. There is only one week left to dive into theatrical universes from here and elsewhere. Most of the shows are translated, so treat yourself to one of the excellent performances of this high-end international festival.

There are must-see shows, like *Lavagem*, *Public Confession* and *M'appelle Mohamed Ali*, and shows that have already passed like *Make Banana Cry*. But you never know... maybe these shows will be on tour later in the new 2022-2023 season, so I share with you my FTA experiences of the last four days.

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Make Banana Cry

The interdisciplinary performance *Make Banana Cry* explores the aesthetics of Asianness, and the exoticization and differentiation of racialized bodies in Western culture.

Andrew Tay and **Stephen Thompson** transform the **Salle polyvalente de l'UQAM** into a catwalk. Everyone is given a pair of mauve, scented bags and asked to put them over their shoes. A sweet scent lingers in the air as we take a seat at this fashion show.

Oh yes, we have ended up in a bizarre fashion show in which the models on the catwalk flirt with numerous cultural clichés. This image is reinforced by the creations of visual artist **Dominique Pétrin**: fake exhibitions, a colourful wall and, of course, the diversity of patterns on the catwalk.

And on this very catwalk, the performance develops into a crazy happening that undermines the fantasy of a 'universal' western pop culture: sometimes downright comical and sometimes confrontational and harsh. The whole is framed by a soundtrack consisting of fragments of music that underline the many clichés of Asianness. An experience!

Make Banana Cry ran until June 5 at the Salle polyvalente de l'UQAM



Them Voices – Image: Charles Lafrance

Them Voices

In ***Them Voices***, past and future generations come together and manifest themselves in **Lara Kramer's** body, mind and dreams. The choreographer of mixed **Oji-Cree** and settler heritage becomes an open channel through time and space.

In the **Espace Libre**, the stage is covered in white plastic, with pockets of black soil underneath. Lights have fallen on the floor, and random construction materials lie dispersed. Kramer rolls through the earth, drags herself through space and pushes a soil-filled bag through her clothing. She drags a weight through the room and makes herself a shelter.

This solo performance takes you unnoticed into an inner world in which there is an eye for social criticism and cultural resistance, summoning a multitude of voices in collective memory. A notable performance at the FTA.

***Them Voices* runs until June 7 at Espace Libre.**



Lavagem – Image: Renato Mangolin

Lavagem

We sit in a square around a dance floor and see a large blue plastic ‘cocoon’. The cocoon moves and, suddenly, the dancers emerge and what follows is an exuberant and dynamic performance.

The six excellent and vibrant dancers, **Alan Ferreira**, **Hiltinho Fantastico**, **Katiany Correia**, **Rômulo Galvao**, **Tony Hewerton** and **Tuany Nascimento**, grab and cling to each other, dance and sing with each other, reject, carry and challenge each other, and then work precisely together in sculpting their bodies into a slippery slide show of statues and sliding escapes!

Combining dance, circus, song and percussion, they make foam and cover the space with immaculate bubbles. We smell the soap and watch the dancers make a chain of buckets, tissue and foam, covering one body with it, putting clothes on like masks, and witness a last visual disappearance in so-called ‘black light’.

Between improvisation, chance and total mastery, Brazilian **Alice Ripoll**’s choreography is hypnotizing and one of the best works I have seen so far in an already excellent edition of the FTA!

Lavagem runs until June 9 at Usine C.



Face to Face – Image: Jeremy Mimmagh

Face to Face

Three landscapes are projected in a panorama view: two men take turns walking through them with outstretched arms, finally meeting on stage. They give each other a long, warm embrace.

From here, the dance performance of **Naishi Wang** and his collaborator **Lukas Malkowski**, both superb performers, transforms into a delightful encounter. Wang and Malkowski use hand gestures, execute a rhythmic play, or simply embrace each other in a warm hug. A look, a smile, arms wide open, an embrace, divisions, and reunions are some of the strategies they use to establish contact in this piece.

‘A short but powerful performance that resonated with me afterwards and made me think of how we communicate and connect with each other.’

These fabulous dancers invite the audience to travel with them through all the emotions their encounters provoke. A short but powerful performance that resonated with me afterwards and made me think of how we communicate and connect with each other. What is born in a face-to-face encounter, what unites and separates us, is explored in a 55-minute transmission of emotions through the body, revealing all its complexity.

Face to Face runs until June 9 at La Chapelle.

Adventures Can Be Found Anywhere, *même dans la répétition*

By showing the gesture of writing, the PME art collective makes this performance an exhibition of the creative process. What is presented is the gesture of writing as a symbol. There are pages on display to read, and a team sits around a table writing and discussing. Feel free to join them, the diaries of Susan Sonntag are the inspiration.

This exhibition/performance reminds us that writing is also reading, a usually private action, but in the Galerie this action becomes public and we witness the pages being created by the members on the spot. Be welcome, read along, think along and write along!

***Adventures Can Be Found Anywhere, même dans la répétition* runs until June 9 at Galerie Leonard & Bina Ellen – free admittance**

The History of Korean Western Theatre



The History of Korean Western Theatre – Image:
Leontien Allemeersch

Oh dear reader, don't miss this FTA performance by **Jaha Koo**, an innovative theatre and video artist who combines multimedia and performance, origami and storytelling. As well, he often collaborates with unexpected partners who lend a striking presence.

In ***The History of Korean Western Theatre***, Jaha Koo, an origami toad and a rice cooker are the main actors telling the history of how the forced westernization of Korean theatre destroyed an old tradition. Under the influence of the occupying forces (the Japanese and British), old traditional Korean dances, ceremonies and rituals were replaced by realistic and "Shakespearized" theatre.

Koo learns through his theatre study and from his grandmother about these rich traditions and he shares this story in a contemporary collage, using audio and video material, physical actions, storytelling and origami. This touching, funny and multidisciplinary show about the devastating process of cultural colonization was followed by a talk back in which the audience exchanged with the artist.

***The History of Korean Western Theatre* runs until June 9 at Theatre d'aujourd'hui**



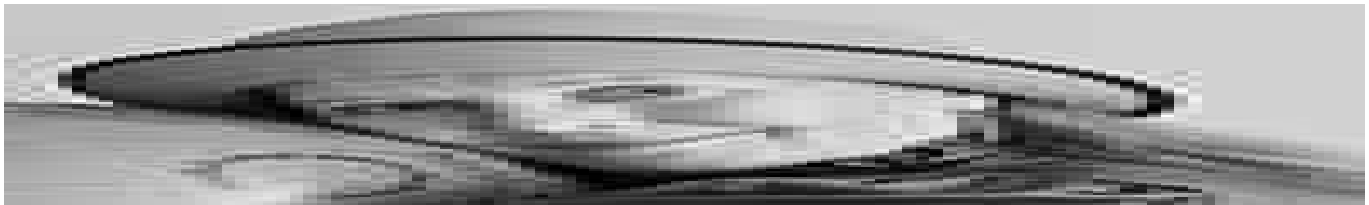
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Feature image: *Make Banana Cry*, by Richmond Lam

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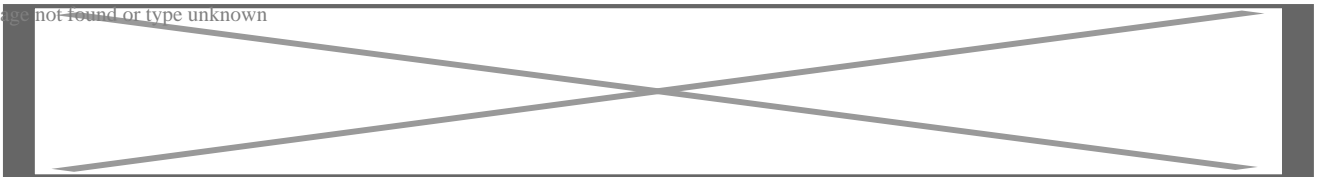
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Originally from the Netherlands, **Jacqueline van de Geer** crossed the Atlantic Ocean in 2005 to live and work in Montréal. She has a bachelor's degree in visual arts and performance arts.

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