

ART

PLACE

ARTIST

TARA LUZ DANSE



Amelia Griffin graduated from The School of Dance's classical ballet and contemporary dance programs in 2006. Since, she has danced for several choreographers and companies including Sylvie Desrosiers, Propeller Dance and Platypus Theatre. Amelia is also an Ashtanga yoga therapist. She has been dancing with Tara Luz Danse since 2008.

Founded in 2006 by choreographer Anik Bouvrette, **Tara Luz Danse** is a contemporary dance company in residence at the Shenkman Arts Centre. The company's work is twofold: we create and present dances for audiences of all ages, and we work in schools and in the community, fostering the discovery of contemporary dance.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Dancer Amelia Griffin worked with a group of senior women to create an improvised dance to live music. The final outcome was a final performance and concert

PARTNER SITE

Wabano's mission is to: provide quality, holistic, culturally-relevant health services to First Nations, Inuit and Métis in Ottawa; engage in clinical, social, economic and cultural initiatives that promote the health of Aboriginal people; promote community-building through education and advocacy; and serve as a centre of excellence for urban Aboriginal health

ABOUT ART PLACE

Art Place, a 3-year professional artist-in-residence program, addresses social issues by placing artists and arts groups in community settings to co-create art projects and provide free of charge arts programming. The 2015-2016 projects enable participants from non-profit groups, in Ottawa, to take creative journeys through theatre, dance, music, storytelling and visual art. Art Place amplifies voices in various underserved communities touched by the project, to tell their stories and share their unique perspectives.

INTERVIEW WITH TARA LUZ DANSE

February 29, 2016

How would you describe yourself as an artist?

I'm an artist whose primary motivation is connection. Whether dancing or creating a choreography, it's important for me to pull from my experiences and express myself in an honest way. A very big part of being an artist for me is recognizing my humanity and as human we connect more through movement than we realize. In movement and dance, I have found ways of expressing my experiences in a deeper level of understanding between myself and the audience that stand through a non-verbal communication. I would describe myself as an artist who moves from the inside, out. (Amelia Griffin, Dancer with the dance company Tara Luz Danse)

What inspired you to pursue a career in the arts?

Dancing has been part of my life since the age of three. I don't remember a time when dance and I were separate. Therefore, there's never been a moment of decision to go into the arts, it is more so an evolution of my practice. Dance is something that always inspires me and gives me a way of expressing the ethereal parts of life; that which can't be expressed with words. (Amelia)

What are some recurring themes in your company's art practice?

Dans notre travail au sein de Tara Luz Danse, nous explorons le vécu de femmes. (Anik Bouvrette, Artistic Director with the dance company Tara Luz Danse)

What are the most important influences?

À Tara Luz Danse, nous tirons notre influence de la danse contemporaine, une forme d'art où chaque artiste est libre de créer un langage en mouvement qui lui est propre et unique. Ce langage devient donc en quelque sorte la signature de l'artiste. C'est cette recherche d'une signature personnelle en danse qui nous fascine! (Anik)

What is your dance company's experience in art projects engaging social practice?

Nous déployons plusieurs projets engageant en milieu scolaire et dans la communauté depuis 2008. Les projets réalisés jusqu'à maintenant

ont été principalement en milieu scolaire entre autres avec « Croisée » et « Impro en mouvement » qui sont deux projets de création pédagogique où les jeunes sont amenés à créer leur propre œuvre en mouvement. Dans la communauté, nous nous consacrons, depuis 2011, à la présentation de sa série d'événements participatifs « En studio avec nous » qui jumèle une présentation d'œuvres dans le répertoire de la compagnie à la participation active du public. Place d'Art représente donc pour nous un premier projet de résidence avec un groupe communautaire. (Anik)

What did you gain from your experience?

L'une de nos préoccupations importantes est de démystifier et de rendre la danse contemporaine accessible aux jeunes et à la communauté. Notre contact grandissant avec les jeunes et la communauté nous a démontré combien une telle expérience peut être riche. (Anik)

How long have you been active in the Ottawa arts community?

Tara Luz Danse a été active dans la communauté dès sa création en 2006. Elle a depuis initié plusieurs projets dans la communauté et en milieu scolaire francophone dont « Croisée », « Impro en mouvement » et « En studio avec nous ». (Anik)

What interested you about working with the AOE Arts Council?

Étant en résidence au Centre des Arts Shenkman depuis 2009, Tara Luz Danse collabore avec le Conseil des Arts AOE depuis plusieurs années. Place d'Art représente toutefois une opportunité d'élargir cette collaboration au sein d'un projet artistique porteur pour la communauté. (Anik)

What made you want to participate in Art Place?

Parce que Place d'Art est un projet mobilisateur et enraciné dans un esprit de partage. (Anik)

What inspired you to pursue this project with this community?

C'est via le Conseil des Arts AOE que nous avons pu être en contact avec le *Wabano Centre for*

Aboriginal Health. Dès la première rencontre avec le directeur du Centre et le groupe de femmes, nous avons été très inspirés. La culture autochtone revêt une grande richesse et nous souhaitons la découvrir davantage et approfondir notre lien celle-ci. (Amelia)

How would you describe the project you will be working on?

Dans le cadre de Place d'art, je travaille avec un groupe de femmes au Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health afin de créer une œuvre d'improvisation en mouvement sur musique « live ». J'amène d'abord le groupe à bouger avec moi pour explorer, sous forme de jeux, les concepts d'improvisation en mouvement utilisés par Tara Luz Danse dans son processus de création. Puis, inspirée par leur vécu de femmes je vais créer une structure d'improvisation en mouvement. Les rencontres se dérouleront avec le musicien François Gravel qui composera aussi une musique spécialement pour l'œuvre créée au sein du projet. (Amelia)

As an artist, what do you hope to get out of this process?

Avec Place d'Art, il sera vraiment intéressant de voir comment le travail que nous faisons depuis longtemps avec les jeunes en milieu scolaire peut s'adapter à un autre groupe tout à fait différent et à des femmes qui ont une plus grande expérience de vie. Notre travail, basé sur l'improvisation en mouvement, est ouvert et a le grand potentiel d'aller rejoindre ceux qui participent au processus de création dans leurs capacités, leurs limitations et leur vécu. Le

projet sera une réelle expérience d'ouverture à l'autre. (Amelia)

What do you hope participants will gain from this process?

À cette étape-ci du projet, j'aimerais qu'ils en retirent tout simplement des moments de plaisir et de partage. (Amelia)

How do you anticipate this work will have an impact on the community?

I really want this project to be a positive experience we can look back on. I hope we can connect with each other through dance and get few tools to better understand each other's stories. (Amelia)

How will your project give voice or expression to the social issue(s) you will be exploring?

Because of the nature of the project, we are really starting with a framework. We are not teaching specific steps or technique and so as we move through the improvisation games, the movement will come through what the participants have experienced in their lives. These discoveries will open the conversation. (Amelia)

How will you know your project is a success?

Je saurai que le projet est un succès s'il se déroule dans un esprit d'ouverture et de respect où chaque femme peut exprimer son vécu. Pour plusieurs, se mettre en mouvement devant les autres sera un réel exercice de confiance. J'espère développer un lien de confiance avec celles-ci et créer un environnement propice au partage. (Amelia)

A FIRST LOOK INTO OUR RESIDENCY

Blog post 1 – Jan 26, 2016 by Amelia Griffin

After Tara Luz Danse's first weeks with the Grandmothers at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, I (Amelia Griffin) am tickled to report on our progress. I went back over our interview post for Art Place, and found that our sessions together are already meeting the hopes we had expressed for this unique project. We mentioned our desire for connection, joy, and allowing improvised movements inform and reflect who and how we are from moment to moment.

Before the holidays, Anik Bouvrette (Artistic Director of Tara Luz Danse), and myself as the project leader, decided it would be best if we attended Wabano's existing Senior's Program's movement classes in order to start being comfortable in each others presence, as well as learning what type of movements are already comfortable for the group. We are so encouraged to see that the movement class offered, promotes health and well-being in body and mind, and listening and adapting to one's natural range of motion. These are two things that are very important to us at Tara Luz Danse.

We knew we would be able to build from such a considered and authentic approach to movement!

So far, we have explored two of six improvisational dance techniques that we will be sharing with the group; word-image, and the line. In word-image, we create a theme (we started with animals) to work within, and then do a round-circle. Each participant must think of a word that matches the theme, and create a movement or shape on the spot that is either a literal or abstract representation of that word. After the person says their word out loud and shows their movement, the group then repeats it back. This game brought out such a burst of creativity and subsequent giggles from each of us. Imagine us rubbing our backs against the chair like a bear, for instance! In the next

concept, the line, each participant stands next to each other to form a straight line and keeps their eyes looking forward. In this concept, you must employ your peripheral vision, sense of trust in the group, and ability to adjust to the group as you walk from one side of the room to the other. It sounds easy but it takes a lot of concentration and quick decision-making when the people next to you walk at different rates. It is a great way to practice compromise!

All in all our beginnings at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health have been extremely positive and feel blessed to work with such a vibrant and funny group of ladies. We look forward to reporting back with more of our improvisational dance concepts and more positive experiences!

LE POUVOIR DU MOUVEMENT

Article blog 2 – 3 février 2016 par Anik Bouvrette

Nous sommes déjà à mi-chemin de notre résidence avec les femmes âgées du Wabano Center for Aboriginal Health et en tant que directrice artistique de Tara Luz Danse, j'ai le plaisir de vous en dire un peu plus sur les liens et les échanges qui se créent entre les participantes et les membres de notre équipe, moi Anik Bouvrette, Amelia Griffin et François Gravel.

Je dois dire que le contact avec ces femmes est une grande source d'inspiration. La culture autochtone revêt une richesse incroyable de par ses liens avec la nature et l'énergie des femmes ajoute un sens profond à notre expérience.

Les explorations en mouvement jumelées aux thématiques de la nature nous ont amené par exemple dans le jeu du «mot-image», à intégrer des sons et des cris comme celui de l'outarde. Nous avons aussi exploré le jeu de la «ligne» en créant une image de vagues et de petites roches en marchant et en ondulant nos bras. À leur propre rythme, les femmes apportent leur énergie individuelle au groupe et le mouvement créé découle de qui elles sont. Au fil des semaines, elles s'ouvrent davantage, de nouvelles femmes se joignent au groupe et nous

bougeons tout simplement pour le pur plaisir de bouger.

Plus j'avance dans le projet, plus je réalise que le mouvement est l'essence même de qui nous sommes parce qu'il existe en nous et partout dans notre quotidien : le mouvement des feuilles dans le vent, le mouvement de la terre, la lune et le soleil, le mouvement du bébé dans le ventre de sa mère, notre respiration. En tant qu'artiste en danse, mon souhait est d'honorer le mouvement et le respecter pour tout ce qu'il est et tout ce qu'il représente.



FAIRE PREUVE DE FLEXIBILITÉ

Article blog 3 – 8 février 2015 par Anik Bouvrette

Nous avons passé un mois de janvier exceptionnel avec les femmes âgées du Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, malgré la température hivernale et certains imprévus qui nous ont causé quelques surprises.

Chaque lundi et mercredi, dès notre arrivée au Centre, nous nous dirigeons vers la salle à manger pour rejoindre les femmes qui dégustent tranquillement une bonne collation. Avec les responsables du Centre, nous invitons les femmes à nous suivre pour participer à notre atelier en mouvement. Une fois dans notre local, accompagnées de la musique de François, nous passons au réchauffement puis aux jeux d'improvisation en mouvement tels le « mot-image », le « miroir », le « vol d'oiseau » et la « ligne ». Jusqu'à maintenant, nous avons intégré les thèmes de la nature et des animaux à ces jeux, qui rejoignent de près la culture autochtone et qui sont une force pour ce groupe de femmes.

Nous avons un groupe de femmes qui participent de façon continue à nos ateliers.

Toutefois, nous devons travailler avec la réalité du Centre : les femmes n'y sont pas toujours, donc pour chaque atelier nous avons souvent de nouvelles femmes qui s'ajoutent ou des femmes qui n'y sont pas, etc. Dès le début du projet, nous savions que cette réalité nous amènerait à faire preuve de flexibilité et d'ouverture à l'égard du processus. Comme artiste, il est important d'explorer comment un changement au plan initial peut en réalité devenir une porte qui nous guide vers de nouvelles explorations et en sorte de nouvelles découvertes. Il est essentiel de demeurer à l'écoute dans le moment présent et ne pas craindre de changer le trajet au besoin. Il ne faut pas avoir peur de suivre le courant du moment présent, là où il nous mènera.

Pour la continuité du projet, notre souhait est de vivre au maximum et de façon créative nos dernières rencontres privilégiées avec les femmes âgées du Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health... là où le moment présent et le courant nous mèneront.

PROJECT CHECK-IN WITH AMELIA GRIFFIN – TARA LUZ DANSE

February 18, 2016

What have you accomplished so far as a group and what challenges have you overcome together?

Connection to nature and community are two things that keep coming up as important elements in the process of this time together. It has been a delight to us all to use dance as a way to express these meaningful elements through movement.

When we're working through each dance task there is a natural supportive energy that the women have with one another, from explaining to each other in their native language, to repeating the task for someone who is a visual learner, to giggling along with someone's joke, to fully engaging with each person's expressions. We have collectively found that more creativity and joy of movement comes out

when the group is working together.

One of the challenges that the group and I have embraced is how to include all people in the group. We have participants with a range of abilities – from a participant in a wheelchair, to another participant living with dementia, to a range of daily physical changes that come with an aging body (especially in the winter months!)

Additionally, some ladies speak predominantly in Cree, or other Native languages, with little vocabulary in English or French. Given the diversity of our little collective, we are in a position of needing to be creative, to take our time, and to use non-verbal communication to connect with one another. This has encouraged me to be fluid with tasks; thinking on the spot of alternative ways to approach the tasks, to asking different members of the group to

support those who may need it, to changing the game plan if someone is unable to complete the task for whatever reason. We have become very good at listening to each other and working as a team.

What does movement represent for these participants and what changes have you noticed with them since the beginning of the project?

At Tara Luz Danse we know that movement is a part of our daily lives, and we are subsequently dancing throughout our day whether we know it or not. However, most people don't necessarily think about this so it's quite natural to feel reticent about moving when there are no specific 'dance moves' to copy. The way we approach movement is from imagery, imagination, improvising new ways of moving your body. So at first, as is expected with any group in a new situation with new concepts, the ladies were quite shy to move at the beginning.

What has happened in the process is the realization of the vast possibilities of movement that are available to each person, rather than the fear of 'not doing it right', or not being able to do the movements due to physical or cognitive restrictions. This realization is what we were hoping for, and what comes out with every group we work with; the freedom that comes from allowing yourself to explore your stories through movement on the fly, all while respecting your emotional, physical, and mental boundaries in the moment. This freedom of exploring and expressing a variety of ways to approach movement without judgement has become a way for the participants to connect and remember their life stories and practices, and to share deeper and more profound aspects of themselves with each other through the common language of movement. In this way, movement has come to represent a bridge between memory and storytelling.

How has Indigenous culture come through the creative work you're doing together?

One of the strongest examples of how the strong Indigenous culture has affected our dancing is when one of the ladies started to use hunting calls when we were improvising with embodying different animals. This was a huge turning point as the group realized that a deep part of her upbringing as a Cree woman is in the hunting practices that her grandfather taught her. It gave her an opportunity to reconnect to her grandfather's teachings around hunting and respect for animals and her choice to bring in sound liberated the rest of the group to include animal calls with their movements.

Nature is a part of the world, and affects all cultures on this earth, but this respect for Mother Nature and her power is something that is definitely a guiding force in Indigenous culture. More than with any other group, I have noticed that using nature as a point of entry and exploration is the most authentic way to create movement with these ladies. The group seems to deeply enjoy having nature take shape through them – embodying animals, and ocean waves, the wind, and earth. Each task that integrates nature provides an easier framework in which to explore different qualities of movement; wind can be both light and powerful, earth has a heavy, slow-moving quality, etc. This is also supported by the Wabano Centre – from the floors each representing a different element (we practice in the basement, or Earth floor), to artwork on the walls in the basement area where we hold our sessions. Given we're working in a Centre where culture is infused and considered in so many ways, I feel it would be hard not to integrate the environment that surrounds our explorations. While the ladies are learning about improvised dance, they are teaching us all at Tara Luz Danse about the deep connection to nature we all have in our lives. It is a beautiful exchange!

QUI DIT DANSE DIT AUSSI MUSIQUE

Article blog 4 – 24 février 2015 par François G ravel

Voilà déjà quelques semaines que nous explorons l'expression par le mouvement avec notre groupe de femmes aînées au Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health. Pour moi, il est fascinant de constater à quel point les femmes nous ont fait confiance dès le début du projet et se sont jointes à l'aventure avec intérêt.



Dès le premier atelier, la complicité était palpable au sein du groupe et nos interactions, semaine après semaine, ont pu se nourrir de ces liens déjà établis.

En tant que musicien, je me laisse souvent influencer et inspirer par la chimie au sein d'un groupe. Avec les femmes du Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, je me suis ainsi inspiré par leur rire, leur énergie positive, et même par les sons d'animaux qui s'échappaient lors de certains de nos jeux d'improvisation en mouvement, ceux-ci me suggérant une ligne musicale.

À chaque nouvel atelier, je vois les participantes entrer dans la salle avec enthousiasme et c'est une véritable source d'inspiration.

REFLECTIONS OF WABANO – PART 1

Blog post 5 – April 18 2016 by Amelia G riffin

We've come to the inevitable end of our sessions with the elder ladies at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health. Tara Luz Danse and the group of about eight women all came to really look forward to enjoying each other's company twice a week, and creating a movement-based piece together.

Below is Part 1 of a two-part blog that reflects on the end of our creative process together from the perspective of the lead artist on this project, Amelia Griffin, and a look into how we took these playful movement concepts and



made them into a piece of dance choreography.

Flashback to two weeks before the final presentation, and the group of ladies and I have completed trying all six of the improvisational dance concepts; Line, Flocking, Word-Image, Chain, Mirror, and Statue. The last two weeks together brought great creativity from the group in incorporating the Medicine Wheel as a theme for the choreography, and way to arrange these concepts. The Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health uses the Medicine Wheel as a model for health and healing, so it felt natural to choose this as a theme to be a point of inspiration for the piece. At this stage we knew that some of the concepts worked for what we wanted to do, and some didn't come as naturally. We decided that our choices of concepts should be based around a few criteria:

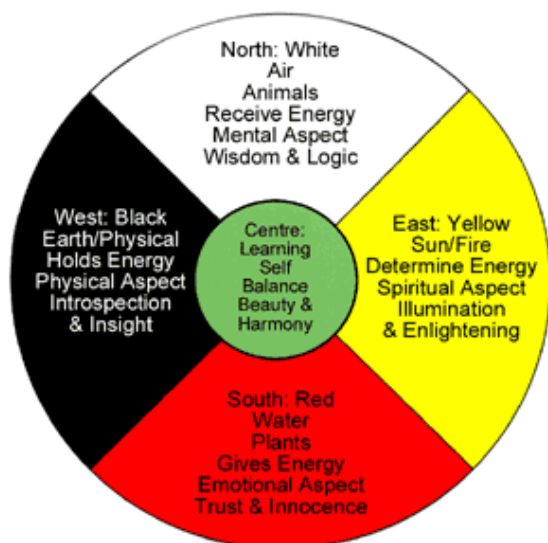
1. They needed to have an element-quality to them, or some aspect of nature.
2. We needed to truly enjoyed doing it with one another.
3. Concepts that everyone can be involved in.

We whittled the concepts down with this criteria, then following the clockwise motion of the Medicine Wheel, the final concepts for the choreography were arranged to follow the elements in this order:

Word-Image – which brought out animals noises and hunting sounds.

Flocking – which supported our air-like qualities of movement.

The Line – which represented the ocean, water, ripples, waves, the tide.



After deciding on our concepts and their order, all we had left to do in the next, and last week

was to try different movement-transitions to weave concepts smoothly from one to the next, and decide on a beginning and ending to the piece.

While this was happening, our musician François Gravel was lent a hand-made drum from the Centre, which led one of the grandmothers to mention stepping lightly as a woman of her age would in a pow wow circle. We started to connect about age, and how myself and the group of ladies are at different stages of life. This reinforced our decision to follow the Medicine Wheel in the choreography, and reflect our perspectives, the cycle of life, seasons of the year, and the power of circular movement and energy as a tool for healing.

Throughout the last part of our creative process together, myself and the grandmothers at the Senior's Program had opportunities for deep reflections on how our differences in age and culture created a space of knowledge-sharing, and deep respect that helps each of us have space to move as a reflection of life itself. I am grateful to have spent time with such open and kind women who shared a part of themselves in this choreography with their knowledge.

More about our Final Performance and how we wove the concepts together into a choreography in Part 2!

REFLECTIONS OF WABANO – PART 2

Blog post 6 – April 21 2016 by Amelia G riffin

As mentioned in Part 1 of this series, the last week of Tara Luz Danse's residency at the Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health was to create meaningful transitions and pathways from each improvisational dance concept to the next. We had the basic order of the concepts in place, great accompanying music from François Gravel (our musician). I proposed a few ways to link them together, along with ideas from the group using everyday movements, movements from our yoga warm-ups, concepts from Tara Luz Danse, and from pow wow steps.

The first question that came up was, 'How do we start?' The beginning and endings of a choreographic work are very potent parts of a choreography. Anik Bouvrette, Artistic Director and choreographer of Tara Luz Danse often says

that the beginnings and endings are the majority of the impact of your piece. The beginning serves as an introduction of a theme, and the people involved.

Since the first concept Word-Image was developed to be seated, we started the choreography with a circle of empty chairs in the centre, and the group waiting around the circle. To enter, we decided to use a game that I presented earlier on in our sessions as an icebreaker. I call it the Shoulder-Meet. Two people from across the circle tiptoe to the center of space (like Grandmothers would do at a pow wow, I was informed by a participant), connect each other's right shoulder, and turn in a circle looking at each other. After two or three turns, you choose a chair to sit in. We repeated

this until all participants were seated in the circle. You can imagine that coming at staring at each other is both powerful and vulnerable, and sitting still together in a circle is grounded and steady. The group took their time with this entrance, which created the powerful, calm environment we wanted for our beginning.



Once everyone was in the seated circle, and the music softened, we started the Word-Image game where each participant embodies an animal and uses movement and animals, then the group repeats it back to each other. Animals are found in the Northern direction of the Medicine Wheel where we also find the element Air. This was represented by the laughter and breath (or being out of breath from laughing!) that was brought about by committing to the animal movements and sounds.

Next we needed a fire element for the Eastern direction and some way to clear the space for the Line concept. I proposed that we incorporate a breathing technique that lifts the arms on an inhale, and lowers them on an exhale – it is similar to a bird's wings flapping slowly, or the beginning of a Sun Salutations in yoga. This felt to us like a firebird, a phoenix, or like the flames of a fire starting to grow. We repeated the breath and arm movements until it brought us to standing, for those of us in the group who do stand. From there we thought to take the arms overhead, then drag the chairs to the sides of the room, walking softly as before. As soon as the chairs are at the extremities of the space the group could set up in a Line on one side of the space one at a time.

The Line concept had an interesting overlap with the Mirror concept in the final choreography, which came out of something that was seemingly a hiccup! When we practiced the Line during our sessions, one of

the participants who gets around in a power wheelchair, was using a new chair. Being in a new chair, the participant had less familiarity and therefore had less dexterity than usual and felt more comfortable sitting on the side making wave and ripple-like movements with her arms. As was explored with Anik Bouvrette during past session, we proposed to walk back and forth in a line like a wave or the ocean tide with sweeping, ocean arms. Each person could stop at any time, and restart again with the line. If you stopped, you had to follow the wave and ripple-like arm movements of the lady in the wheelchair; like a Mirror, or group exercise Flocking that we also tried. It was a perfect combination of the ripples and tide and brought the ocean in a poetic display of connection to each other, and the Water element in the South.

For the fourth and last component we decided because it was the West, which brings the Earth element, then perhaps we should display the four corners of the Earth, and the Four Directions. At the end of the Water section, we slowly walked into groupings of three at the four directions, and repeat the same Shoulder-Meet together, connected at the right shoulder and walking in a circle looking at or towards each other.

Since we had completed representing the four elements, the four directions, and the improvisational dance concepts, we decided it seemed like a natural time to end. Coming back to the breath that we worked on together in our yoga warm-ups, and the connection of breath to life-cycle, or taking your first and last breath, we came into a circle in the centre. There we held hands, and breathed deep breaths as François brought his responsive and haunting music to a silence. It was a truly powerful piece on life, nature, and connection.

For the last performance we had a small, but appreciative audience of Tara Luz Danse and Wabano staff, cultural officer at the City of Ottawa, and members of the Seniors Program at Wabano. The audience was very touched and reflected and connected to themes of nature, breath, and connectedness. The memories of this time are rich and I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to create an improvisational dance piece with such powerful and funny elder ladies.

L'ART DU CONTE, LE MOUVEMENT ET L'ESPRIT: PENSÉES FINALES AVEC AMELIA GRIFFIN ET TARA LUZ DANSE

27 mai, 2016

Comment décrivez-vous votre expérience avec Place d'Art?

L'expérience générale du projet [Place d'Art](#) fut très positive. Avec ce projet, Tara Luz Danse a pu adapter son approche en médiation culturelle, développée d'abord pour les jeunes, à un groupe de femmes aînées autochtones. Les échanges avec les femmes au cours du projet ainsi que les explorations en mouvements ont confirmé que la danse est une discipline accessible à tous et que l'approche développée par Tara Luz Danse, basée sur des jeux d'improvisation en mouvement, est pertinente pour le public diversifié et de tous les âges. Les femmes participantes au projet ont d'ailleurs beaucoup apprécié les ateliers en mouvement avec la musique en direct et ont participé avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme. Par ce projet, [Tara Luz Danse](#) et le [Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health](#) ont également pu avoir une première occasion de collaboration. Les nouveaux liens créés entre les deux organismes pourront être porteur de projets futurs.



Quelles sont les leçons les plus importantes que vous retirez de ce projet?

La plus belle leçon tirée via Place d'Art est que dans ce type de projet, il est important de vivre le moment présent et de travailler avec la réalité de l'organisme qui nous accueille. Dans notre expérience avec le Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, à cause de la température hivernale entre autres, les femmes n'étaient pas

toujours au Centre lorsque nous avons un atelier prévu à l'horaire. Ainsi, pour chaque atelier nous avons souvent des femmes qui n'y étaient pas ou de nouvelles femmes qui s'ajoutaient au groupe. Dès le début du projet, nous savions que cette réalité nous amènerait à faire preuve de flexibilité et d'ouverture à l'égard du processus. Le projet a confirmé que comme artiste, il est important d'explorer comment un changement au plan initial peut en réalité nous guider vers de nouvelles explorations et de nouvelles découvertes. Il est essentiel de demeurer à l'écoute dans le moment présent et ne pas craindre de changer le trajet au besoin.

Comment est-ce que le projet fut un succès?

Le projet fut un succès parce que nous avons réussi à sensibiliser les participants, le personnel et les gens qui fréquentent le Centre à la danse contemporaine. Au début du projet, les gens ne connaissaient pas du tout la discipline. Par conséquent, ils étaient réticents à participer. En s'intégrant au groupe de femmes, les artistes ont pu peu à peu créer un lien de confiance avec elles et les amener à participer au projet. Le musicien en direct fut définitivement un atout pour mettre les participantes à l'aise. Les jeux d'improvisation en mouvement ont également permis aux femmes de bouger selon leurs capacités et s'amuser tout en créant leur propre œuvre de danse improvisée inspirée par les symboles forts de leur culture autochtone comme les cris d'animaux et les éléments de la nature. L'énergie positive et le plaisir de bouger créé lors de chaque atelier a suscité une plus grande participation des femmes. Le nombre de participantes a ainsi augmenté tout au long du projet.

« A healthy, positive, and supportive environment is necessary for creativity and I believe that the positive energy generated in-session is a big part of the pride and joy displayed by the participants

in the final showcase. The participants felt safe in an uninhibited expression of themselves and the people who came to watch the performance felt a genuine strength and connection between the participants. » Amelia Griffin

Lors de la présentation finale, les femmes étaient fières de présenter leur œuvre. De plus, les membres du personnel et les invités ont, par leur réaction et leurs commentaires, démontré une ouverture et un grand respect par rapport au travail qui a été réalisé avec les participantes et au travail de Tara Luz Danse.

Qu'est-ce que vous aimeriez suscitez auprès de votre public?

Le message que nous voulons laisser aux gens qui vont entendre parler de notre projet est que la danse contemporaine est une discipline qui est accessible à tous. Peu importe notre âge, nos expériences et notre culture, nous sommes tous des corps en mouvement. La danse nous permet de nous exprimer dans notre singularité, mais aussi d'entrer en contact avec l'autre de façon non-verbal.

« While seeing this project at face-value, one would think that there are a lot of differences between the members of Tara Luz Danse, and the participants at Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health. What we experienced, and what we intend to display is that in fact our humanity was a great source of connection. Story-telling is important for people, and we hope that people who visit this project learn that difference of stories, and movement-based story-telling, can often lead to a common understanding of internal experience. Our humanity and ability to connect and share is important for building understanding and health, especially in a diverse community like Ottawa. » Amelia Griffin

De quelles façons est-ce que le projet a contribué à la communauté?

Le projet a eu un impact à deux niveaux. D'abord, il a fait du bien au corps et à l'esprit des participantes. Les ateliers en mouvement ont permis aux femmes de bouger de façon créative et surtout de participer à une activité physique adaptée aux capacités de chacune.

« The community who engaged in the project benefitted from the opportunity to move two times a week. One of the most important things for the people in the Senior's Program at Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health, as heard from M. Parent, is healthy movement. The Centre believes, as we do at Tara Luz Danse, that movement is an essential part of health and wellness. » Amelia Griffin

Puis, le projet a resserré les liens dans la communauté. La collaboration entre Tara Luz Danse et le Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health fut l'occasion de créer des liens entre deux organismes dont la mission est différente. Ainsi, les échanges au cours du projet ont mené à de nouvelles idées pour le futur et à une meilleure connaissance de l'autre et de ses enjeux. Tara Luz Danse et le Wabano Centre for Aboriginal Health discutent présentement de possibilités de collaborations pour l'avenir. À titre d'exemple, le Centre aimerait mettre sur pied un projet intergénérationnel en danse. Cette initiative pourrait donc être une suite au projet Place d'Art et être une nouvelle opportunité de collaboration.

Selon vous, qu'est-ce que les participants ont appris de leur expérience?

« We feel that the participants learned that non-verbal communication is a part of our everyday lives, and a tool to use when words aren't enough, or verbal language is a barrier. The group also took away the sense that gathering to dance together brings a great sense of support and community between those involved, as each person felt safe to be vulnerable and express their truth.

All of the participants experience dance as an integral part of their culture, but having the opportunity to create their own movements and choices within a structure allowed them to view dance in a new way, outside of the context of their culture's specific dance movements. They all felt like this open platform allowed them to speak of their lives creatively – something that they didn't believe was possible at first. It was very validating to the members of the dance creation that once they

showed the final piece, that the people watching felt their stories. They each felt like their experience of life are worthy of recognition. » Amelia Griffin

Est-ce que les participants ont ressenti que ce que ce qui est disponible au niveau de l'art et de la culture est accessible au niveau physique, financier ou géographique? Est-ce que leur participation dans ce projet a eu un impact à ce niveau?

« The participants benefit from great programming through Wabano that supports many aspects of health and wellness, and arts and culture. The participants don't feel like they are at a lack of experiencing arts and culture. This particular project, however, brought them outside of seeing arts and culture solely from the perspective at Wabano, and gave them a fresh way to participate in the arts and culture in their larger community. » Amelia Griffin

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