

WILD SOMA

Atlas of Embodied Worldmaking



WILD SOMA

Wild Soma is a collective of experienced embodied artist facilitators engaged in...

Moving as being.

Moving and being moved

...as healing

...as knowing

...as transmitting and receiving

...as creating

...as resonating

...as connecting

...as love

...as listening

...as kinship

...as aliveness



WILD SOMA

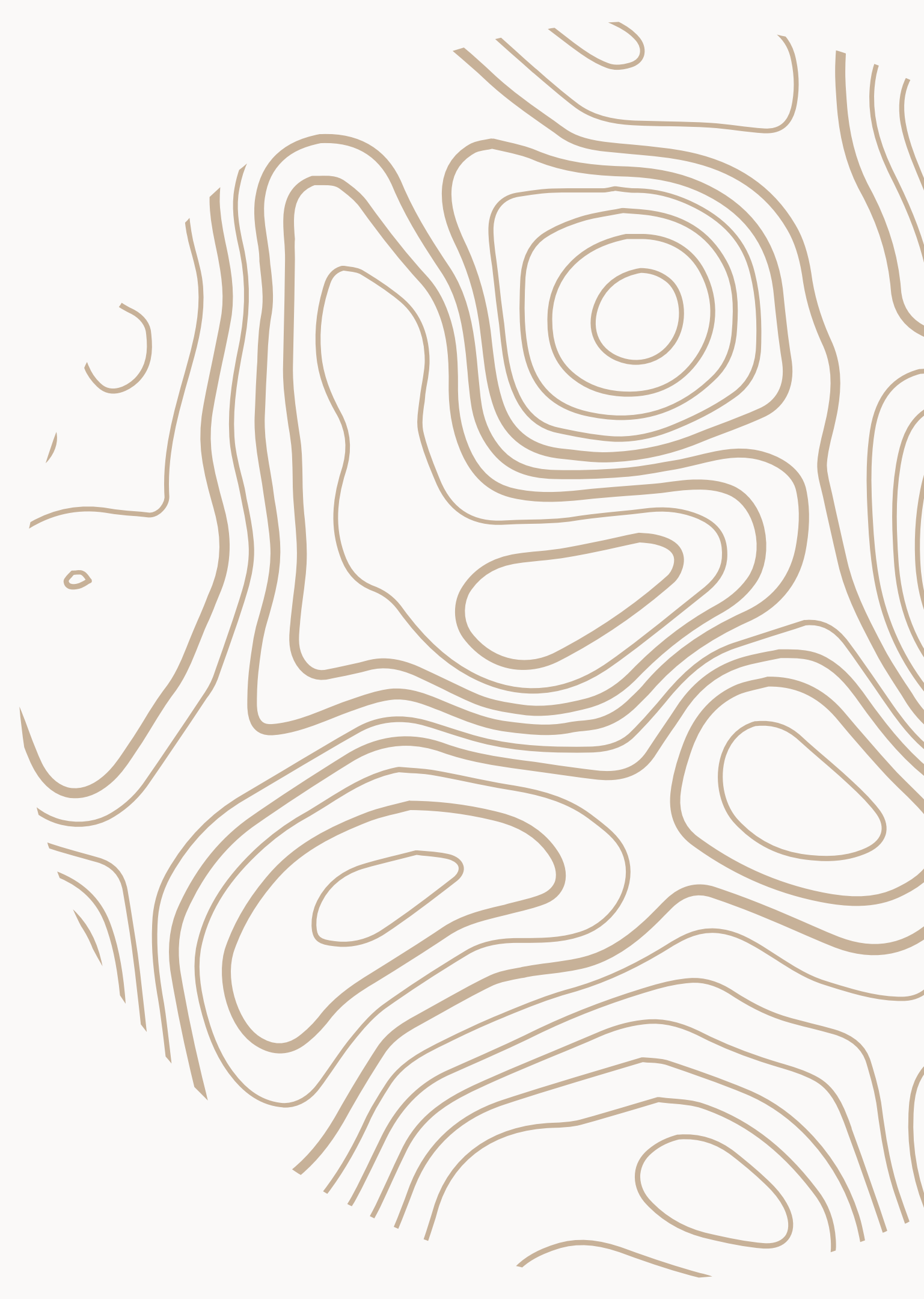
is an ad hoc group formed in 2021 to support the research and practice of embodiment as a world making process. Core members Julia Aplin, Shannon Litzenberger, Andrea Nann and Roula Said are established dance artists, performance makers, movement facilitators and community mobilizers. Their shared interest in embodiment practice as a world-making proposal is the basis of their collaboration. Interested in animating the self-in-the-world relationship, Wild Soma is a platform to research, design, prototype and experiment with interventions that centre new ways of being through aesthetic embodied participatory experience. Concerned with the state of climate emergency and inspired by this time of important social change and growing interconnection, Wild Soma aims to recast the body as self, in specific relationships to the social, cultural, temporal and planetary ecosystems we live within. By illuminating a sense of interconnectedness within the living world, Wild Soma transforms aesthetic processes into a collective world-making practice.

Wild Soma's activities are currently supported by a two-year research grant from the Canada Council for the Arts.



Canada Council
for the Arts

Conseil des arts
du Canada



Embodiment is...
An awareness of our aliveness.
A consciousness of self as a specific, singular being in process with a multiplicity of other beings--a wholeness of self where the imaginary divisions of body/matter/spirit/soul/energy/experience/history/connection/community need not apply.

-Julia Aplin

An acknowledgement that our consciousness arises through us AS bodies, in relationship to our world.
An understanding that we have integrated systems of intelligence.
The 'being-ness' of us- our self-in-the-world-ness.
The way we orient toward thriving.

-Shannon Litzenberger

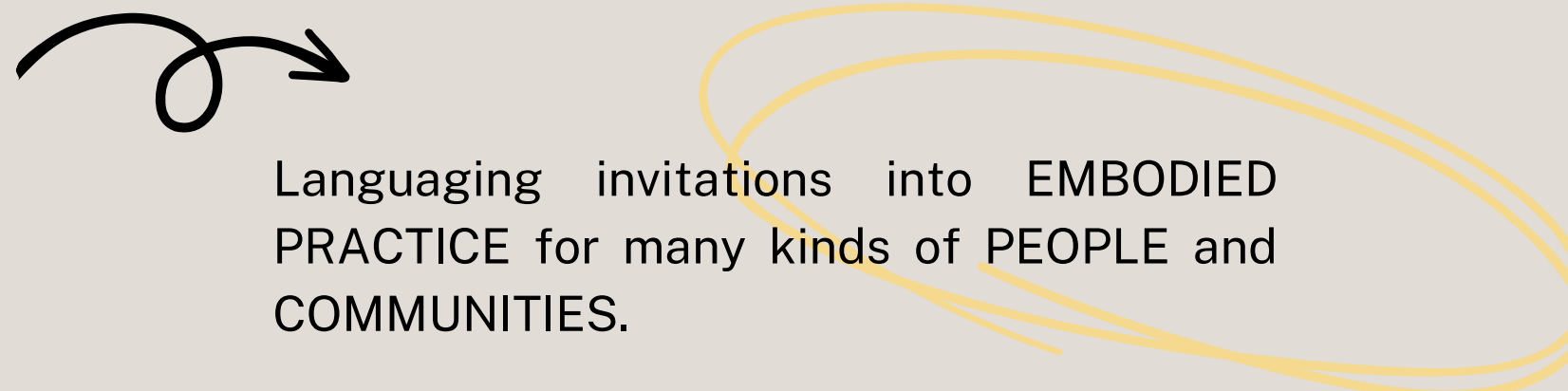
Embodiment is...
To listen through sensation.
To resonate with the world around us.
To use our senses to grow filaments of perception and connection.
To be lovingly anchored in our bodies on the earth.
To connect with nature and community.
An architecture of interconnectedness.

-Roula Said

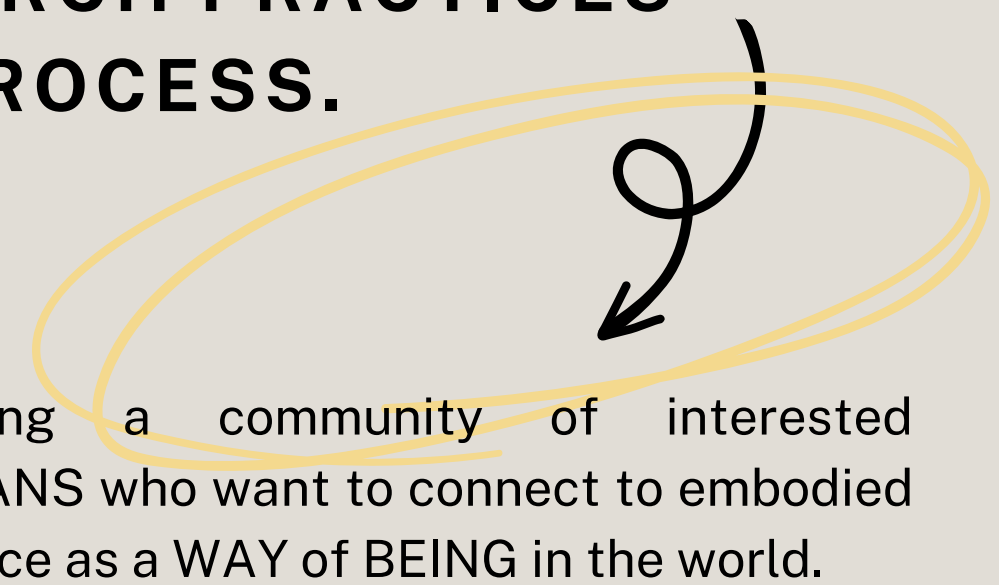
Embodiment is...
Essential awarenesses.
Relations across time and space.
Geometry that connects all life.
How we experience ourselves as unique and part of a whole.
Consciousness, intentionality, senses and perception, aliveness and reciprocity.
Always arriving at gratitude and love.

-Andrea Nann


**WILD SOMA IS CULTIVATING...
TIME AND SPACE FOR EMBODIED RESEARCH PRACTICES
THAT CENTRES INQUIRY AND PROCESS.**



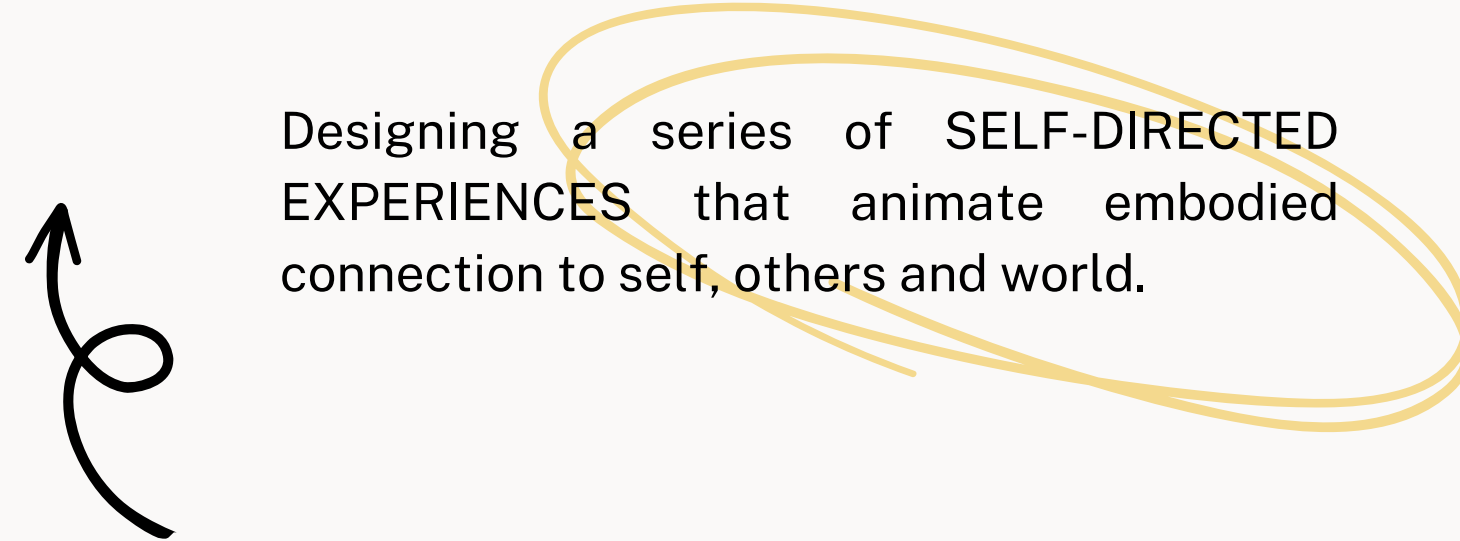
Languaging invitations into EMBODIED PRACTICE for many kinds of PEOPLE and COMMUNITIES.



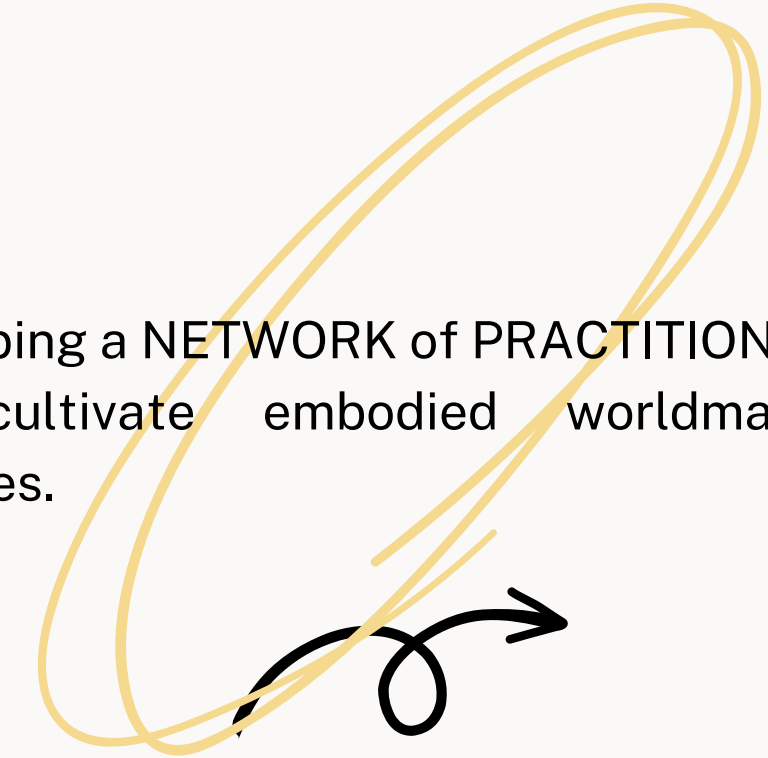
Growing a community of interested HUMANS who want to connect to embodied practice as a WAY of BEING in the world.



Designing intentional GUIDED EXPERIENCES that centre embodied ways of knowing, being and doing.



Designing a series of SELF-DIRECTED EXPERIENCES that animate embodied connection to self, others and world.



Developing a NETWORK of PRACTITIONERS who cultivate embodied worldmaking practices.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Seven principles guide and organize our work

1. Centring aesthetic, experiential, sensory & embodied ways of knowing, being and sharing.
2. Disrupting the harmful cults of modernity (with love).
3. Attuning to kinship, interdependence, relationality & co-creation.
4. Centring care and wellbeing for all beings; human and more than human.
5. Attuning to cycles of life in time and place
6. Inviting Anti-prescriptive methodologies. Invitations, not instructions.
7. Embracing emergent possibilities



JULIA APLIN

Julia Aplin has been studying and practicing movement for over 40 years. She has an intense curiosity about the human body in motion and draws on a variety of tools and techniques in her current practice. Julia danced full time for 15 years with Dancemakers, under the Artistic Direction of Serge Bennathan performing around the world. She is an award winning choreographer and has created dances for theatres, rivers, boxing rings, wading pools, cyberspace and neuroscience labs. She works with a wide range of people from elite performers to beginners. Julia founded and led Triple C, a community dance group for creation, collaboration and community 2019-2021. Julia is on faculty at University of Toronto and Centre for Indigenous Theatre teaching movement to actors. She is a consultant with PULSE research team for movement and aging at McMaster University. She was an artist in residence at the LIVElab a world class facility for the scientific study of music, sound and movement in relation to human health. In September 2022, she led three installations for riverMOUTH with Urbanvessel and Art in the Park to offer Torontonians a closer relationship to the Cobecheonk/Humber River. She is currently holds a fellowship with rareCharitable reserve in Cambridge, Ontario and is studying embodiment and kinship through human and tree relations through the Masters of Environmental Studies Program at York University.
www.upwardspiral.me





SHANNON LITZENBERGER

Shannon Litzenberger (she/her, Tkaronto) is an award-winning contemporary dancer, choreographer, director and embodiment facilitator. Inspired by the borderless landscapes of her prairie homeland, she creates sensory-rich multi-disciplinary performance experiences that animate our relationship to land, community and the forgotten wisdom of the body. An imaginative creator, she often develops unique collaborations across art forms and communities, centring participatory experiences in artistic processes. Throughout her 20+ year career, her work has been presented across Canada and the US, in collaboration with many of Canada's leading artists across disciplines.

The creative principles and embodied practices she works with regularly in the studio are also central to her work in leadership development, organizational culture development, public policy development and systems change. Backed by a growing body of emergent research from across a spectrum of fields in both the sciences and humanities, her approach to personal and collective transformation focuses on recovering our capacity to feel and sense ourselves and the world around us as a way of knowing, being and co-creating. She works frequently across corporate, academic and non-profit spaces, with organizations such as the Minneapolis College of Art and Design (MCAD), the Ivey Business School at Western University, Memorial University, Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, Department of Canadian Heritage, Canada Council for the Arts, Cultural Pluralism Movement in the Arts - Ontario (CPAMO), and others in support of creating a healthier, more interconnected, equitable and resilient society.

ANDREA NANN

Andrea Nann is a contemporary dance artist, arts educator, founding artistic director of Dreamwalker Dance Company, and founder/co-creator of Conscious Bodies Methodology®, an embodied community practice. Andrea dances to reach across distance and to experience herself and others in celebration of possibility, plurality, imagination, originality, and belonging. Through her work Andrea enlivens Dreamwalker's invitation to awaken and experience oneself in relationship with Self, Others, Environment and All that Is.

A graduate of York University's Department of Fine Arts, Andrea was a member of the Danny Grossman Dance Company for 15 years from 1988-2003 where she created, performed and taught major roles from the works of Mr. Grossman and guest choreographers. Over a 34-year career she has contributed to the creation of new works by over 70 dance and theatre creators from across Turtle Island.

Andrea has been recognized with awards for choreography, performance, contributions to the performing arts sector and for her work in community actioning. As an Artist Educator she has devised and guided programs for Toronto District School Board and school boards across Southern Ontario. In 2018 in association with the City of Toronto Newcomer Office, Andrea created The Welcome Project, addressing inclusion and cultural literacy based on internal and external challenges faced by Newcomers to Canada. In 2020 (during global lockdown) she created The Welcome Project - Sharing Stories, moving online and bringing together newcomers, immigrants, mixed-abilities youth, dance artists, Indigenous artists, and individuals from 2SLGBTQ+ communities, promoting mental health and wellbeing, social inclusion and positive inter-group communication.

Andrea believes that dance and embodiment can shift attitudes and ways of being, tuning us into what makes each of us distinct, to what we share, and ultimately how we can live together in wonderment and peace.





ROULA SAID

Roula Said is a singer, dancer, musician and wordsmith of Palestinian heritage based in Toronto, Canada. Roula has been studying, teaching and performing Arab music and dance for over 25 years. From within her tradition as practiced here in the west where she has also explored many other styles of movement, music, voice and dance, Roula has created Seven Waves Movement and Embodied Voice, original and innovative methodologies rooted in the Arab Arts.

Roula also plays qanun (Middle Eastern table harp) and percussion to accompany traditional Arabic songs and original songs created from her sufi-inspired poems. She has recently received a Canada Council for the Arts grant to compose a song-cycle entitled SongVersations with the Beloved. The exploration process is based on moving the words through her body to find lines, shapes, tempos and rhythms, as a basis of her compositions.

For the good part of 7 years, Roula worked alongside her partner, David Buchbinder to run a cross-cultural creativity-based project called Diasporic Genius that brought citizens together across boundaries of race, religion, ethnicity and age to create music, art, feasts and festivals to enrich their communities and the city at large. The lion's share of the work happened in Thorncliffe Park and then expanded into communities in Etobicoke and Scarborough which were serving the incoming Syrian refugee population.

Deeply interested in ceremony and meaningful transitions, Roula currently works as a wedding officiant and a death doula, supporting and empowering individuals and families to expand into areas of greater choice, agency and even beauty when it comes to death-care.



Wild Soma Advisory Circle

Phil Davis

Phil is Mohawk/Cayuga of the Haudenosaunee peoples, whose family on both sides originate from Six Nations. Phil has resided in St. Catharines for most of his life and has many ties to Indigenous Peoples in Niagara and beyond. Phil is an active member in his own community working with his Peoples to help build a more sustainable future. He is the Cultural Resource Coordinator for his local Niagara Regional Native Centre, bringing music and traditional knowledge forward for the community at large. Phil has many years of experience of volunteerism and board membership through the Centre, and guides a vision to further its growth towards economic self-sustainability. Phil is also a volunteer counsellor with the Indigenous Justice Diversion Program and sits on the Advisory council. He also sits with the Justice Sharing Table Group that brainstorms with Justice frontline workers, Aboriginal legal services, presiding Justices, Crown Attorneys, Ministry of Attorney General administration staff, Police Association, Law Society, John Howard Society, and Traditional Knowledge Keepers, who selected Phil to serve on the Justice team, to oversee the challenges and complexities associated with the Indigenous Peoples court.

For the past 4 years, Phil has been involved with the development of Niagara Region as a UNESCO Geopark, which will generate economic opportunities for his community in the coming years. Phil has been a contributing artist with Dreamwalker Dance Company's The Welcome Project and The Ontario Shebang (since 2016) and has served as a consultant and advisor with the Company since 2019. Phil is a member of the Little Creek, a Pow Wow group that has been nominated at the 2018 CBC Indigenous Music Awards for Best Pow Traditional Album.

Danielle Denichaud

Danielle Denichaud is a first-generation Canadian currently residing in Tkaronto, Turtle Island, whose professional roots are grounded in an eight-year career as a professional contemporary dancer, followed by ten years as a holistic health consultant and movement educator. Her experiences in movement as expression, movement as therapy and movement as learning led her to pursue undergraduate studies in child education and graduate studies in social justice education, curriculum studies, teacher education and policy development. Danielle works as a researcher/knowledge mobilizer for Dreamwalker Dance Company and is a PhD student at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education; in both capacities she explores the symbiotic bridges between the performing arts and community well-being; social justice education and embodied learning; environmental education and holistic health promotion. Her doctoral research explores the if/how embodied pedagogies and embodied health methodologies represent integrated pathways for engagement across the domains of 'care, holism and ecology'. In her personal and professional practices, Danielle understands health literac(ies) through the lenses of Euro-Western, non-Euro-Western and Indigenous ways of knowing and being. Through her contributions to the fields of education, health and performing arts, Danielle seeks to communicate the fecundity of diverse methodologies for cultivating inter-relational experiences of human health, social harmony and environmental stewardship through the dynamic living system of one's own body.

Michelle Silagy

Contemporary dance artist Michelle Silagy maintains a close relationship between her arts practice and her teaching practice of 31 years. Her choreographic work hailed for its gentle nuance, has been presented in Amsterdam, The Arctic, New York, Montreal, across Ontario, and in several Toronto venues including The Gardiner Museum where she premiered an inclusive multi-generational performance. Silagy's Inclusion Practice includes DanceAbility [DA] Teaching Certification (2012/Vienna), DA Master Certification (2015/Uruguay) from Alito Alessi – and – participating in Oily Cart's (London, England) Virtual International Sensory Lab 2020 per invitation. Silagy's extensive work with youth animates her approach when collaborating in community settings. As Young Dancers' Program Director at The School of Toronto Dance Theatre [STDT], Silagy designs inclusive classes for children and authors Pedagogy curriculum for the STDT professional training artists. Silagy has shared innovative practices, with school-based teachers and artists among well over 1000 students throughout Ontario (OAC) and throughout Canada and in London, England (Royal Conservatory of Music). Silagy originated WE Dance, adult inclusion classes, with STDT and Canada's National Ballet School. Silagy and Director Lynda Hill created Dora Nominated Flying Hearts, a relaxed performance touring in Ontario and Manitoba. Silagy is Inclusion Facilitator with Andrea Nann's Dreamwalker Dance Company since 2019. Silagy is currently developing an inclusive dance funded by TAC and OAC.

WILD SOMA



THE ARTISTS OF WILD SOMA FACILITATE EMBODIED PRACTICES ACROSS A NUMBER OF CONTEXTS AND COMMUNITIES INCLUDING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND SOCIAL JUSTICE LEARNING, ENVIRONMENTAL RELATIONS AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

WILD SOMA



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