



## FTA Breathing Space, Oxygen for Artists!

Montreal, 30 September 2020 — Last spring the pandemic turned everything upside down, calling into question the order of things and ways of doing things, leading the Festival TransAmériques to rethink its responsibility and its activities. The crisis is still hitting us hard. Given the current context, the Festival is launching a new initiative in support of artists: the **FTA Breathing Space**, investing **\$244 000** to support **27 projects** by **42 artists** from Quebec and across Canada. In response to an obvious need, the FTA decided to refocus on the creative act — its *raison d'être* — and to get more deeply involved with the theatre and dance communities.

### What do Artists Need?

Martin Faucher, co-executive and artistic director of the FTA, together with Jessie Mill, dramaturge and artistic advisor, came up with the concept of the **FTA Breathing Space**, a means of offering creative space-time, a moment to explore new horizons. They engaged in ongoing dialogue with artists to determine just what they really need. What were their desires, their ambitions? How could the FTA help them in concrete terms?

*«Given the urgency of the current situation, our primary role is to listen. So that artists can catch their breath, so that they can get back to work, so that they can imagine an inspiring and intelligent revival of the performing arts, what they need most is time and space. Time for reflection, for maturation. Space where ideas can flourish and take shape. That's what we want to make available to artists, starting now.»*

— **Martin Faucher**

### FTA Breathing Space, A Variable Geometry Format

The **FTA Breathing Space** will provide time for working, often devoid of any imperative to produce a performance-ready piece or to obtain spectacular results. A multiple, flexible format, it might take the form of artistic residencies or investing in co-productions, or providing funding for research, which might at times also involve technical or dramaturgical support. In all cases the FTA will make its expertise and resources available for the benefit of artistic projects and approaches.

Of long or short duration, the **FTA Breathing Space** emphasizes exploring, testing ideas and taking risks in a context that offers artists freedom of action and adequate working conditions. The **FTA Breathing Space** will create synergies and activate solidarity with Festival partners and collaborators.

### FTA Breathing Space Stats

Following the cancellation of its 14<sup>th</sup> edition in spring 2020, the FTA financially compensated the companies scheduled to perform, as well as the venues where the shows were to be presented. Due to that cancellation it now has significant financial leeway, and aims to quickly make funds available to an artistic milieu very much in need of assistance.

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The **FTA Breathing Space** will support **27 projects** by **42 artists** from Quebec and across Canada, including **2Fik, 7Starr, Amanda Acorn, Daina Ashbee, Elle Barbara, Marie Brassard, Maxime Carbonneau and Laurence Dauphinais, Paul Chambers, Marilou Craft, Mélanie Demers, Clara Furey, Ellen Furey and Malik Nashad Sharpe, Catherine Gaudet, Sophie Gee, Anne-Marie Guilmaine, Lara Kramer, Catherine Lavoie-Marcus, Soleil Launière, Lucy M. May, Parker Mah, projets hybrés, Sovann Rochon-Prom Tep, Florent Siaud, Catherine Tardif, Michel F. Côté and Marc Parent, Naishi Wang and Katie Ward.**

The FTA will be investing in **8 co-productions**, providing support to **19 research projects** and also to **2 artistic residencies** totalling 12 days. More than **100 artists**, artisans and cultural workers involved in these projects will benefit directly from our support.

The FTA wishes to thank its public partners who allow us to help artists in need: the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec, the Direction de la culture et du patrimoine de la Ville de Montréal, Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council for the Arts and the Conseil des arts de Montréal. The FTA also wishes to thank the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and the Canada Council for the Arts for emergency funding provided in response to COVID-19. Our thanks also to all those who contributed to our annual fundraising campaign. They donated **\$53 787** to the FTA Co-production Fund in 2019-20, funds that were allocated directly to the **FTA Breathing Space**, which can now also count on support from precious allies such as Théâtre Aux Écuries and LA SERRE - arts vivants.

### **Long-term Commitment**

Current circumstances have led the FTA to reaffirm its values and to redefine its engagement with the community. In order to ensure that these territories of exploration remain fertile over the long term, the Festival intends to extend the **FTA Breathing Space** for many years to come.

Meanwhile, we hope to see you next year from May 26 to June 10, 2021 for the 15<sup>th</sup> edition of the Festival where the **FTA Breathing Space** will find an echo, resonating with the shows presented, with festive events at the Quartier général and in the very heart of the FTA Playgrounds.

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