

16th edition of Festival TransAmériques

Radiant abundance at FTA

Dance
+ Theatre

Montreal, Monday, June 20, 2022 - From May 25 to June 9, a long-awaited encounter between local audiences and artists from all over the world finally took place. The 16th edition of Festival TransAmériques, marked by the return of its international program, swept through Montreal in a vibrant celebration of the performing arts. Over the course of **16 days, 24 dance and theater performances** brought a curious and attentive audience to theaters and public spaces, from the Maisonneuve market to the beach at Quai de l'Horloge and a community centre in Little Italy. More than **39,000 enthusiastic festival-goers** attended the Festival. A multigenerational and diverse audience filled the venues and brought the overall attendance rate to a soaring **93%**.

Nothing could have evoked this invitation to meet again, this call to reconnect with the world's stages better than a pair of intertwined hands – the main image of the Festival's visual campaign. Co-artistic directors Martine Dennewald and Jessie Mill, along with the Festival's general manager David Lavoie, emphasized the importance of the arts' mobility across borders by welcoming more than **200 artists from 18 countries**, with a notable presence of shows from the African continent and Brazil.

As a co-producing festival firmly rooted in its artistic community, FTA was proud to present the premieres of new works by Quebec and Canadian artists. Catherine Gaudet's technically brilliant and mesmerizing **Les jolies choses** was greeted with frantic enthusiasm. Pierre Lefebvre's political essay **Le virus et la proie** was given a compelling incarnation on stage by director Benoit Vermeulen. Alix Dufresne and Étienne Lepage's ingenious offbeat humor took audiences by surprise in **Malaise dans la civilization**. Ellen Furey and Malik Nashad Sharpe, with truly dazzling originality, brought the fantastical legend of **High Bed Lower Castle** to life. The tangible chemistry between fellow dancers Lukas Malkowski and Naishi Wang moved the audience profoundly in **Face to Face**, a new show choreographed by the latter.

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FTA 2022 in numbers

103 performances of **24** shows from **14** countries (Belgium, Brazil, Burkina Faso, Canada, Ivory Coast, France, Greece, Italy, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Korea, Senegal, United Kingdom, United States)

213 artists from **18** countries

12 co-productions, including two international co-productions (*Elenit*, *La plus secrète mémoire des hommes*)

8 new shows created in 2022, including **7** world premieres

9 North American premieres

75 FTA Playground activities (meetings with artists, discussions, workshops, FTA Clinics)

24 school groups with around **600** students

191 presenters and programmers from **33** countries

141 journalists covering the Festival, including **60** accredited journalists



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Holoscenes © Lars Jan

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Youthful enthusiasm

Accessibility and transmission are at the heart of the Festival's mission, and FTA has once again welcomed large numbers of young spectators. **Eka shakuelem**, an immersive program for Indigenous youth focused on the performing arts and its different professions, brought **7** participants from Mashteuiatsh, Wemotaci, Senneterre, Lac-Simon and Wendake to the Festival. Students from **4 university courses** in Moncton, Ottawa and Montreal explored and analyzed FTA's programme. The **Rencontres internationales** and **Conversations on Performance** welcomed **34** emerging artists and critics from Quebec, Canada, Haiti, Ivory Coast, Mexico, France, Belgium and Germany. Thirty young festival leaders from around the world gathered with experienced mentors for the Festival Academy's 7-day Atelier Montreal, to discuss the role that festivals, art and culture play in the world today. **FTA is proud to have hosted this first North American edition of Festival Academy**, stimulating reflection on the festivals of the future.

Enchanting public spaces

At the very beginning of the Festival, more than **18,000 spectators** were riveted by the aquatic installation **Holoscenes** on Esplanade Tranquille. Lars Jan's monumental, ambitious and poetic work raised audience's consciousness of the impacts of climate change through vivid images and became the starting point for a whole series of works on water in its different forms. A few days later, on the shores of the St. Lawrence, the Gaspesian theatre company À tour de rôle brought 150 years of debate on marine mammals from the Canadian House of Commons to **La conquête du beluga** by multidisciplinary artist Maryse Goudreau, who also created the immersive piece **Dans le ventre de la baleine**.

With Alessandro Sciarroni's **Save the last dance for me**, FTA took over the square in front of the Maisonneuve market as well as the Cité-des-Hospitalières and the Casa d'Italia in order to rescue an endangered Italian dance from extinction. Thanks to workshops before and after the show, 80 Montrealers were introduced to the *polka chinata* social dance and are now able to carry its steps and memory forward.

Proud Africa

"The act of creating contemporary art explores the traces of our ancient history, reactivating what we have kept from a long journey. From there, a burning flame emerges."

- Felwine Sarr, during a public talk at FTA's Headquarters.

For the first time in the Festival's history, FTA opened with a large-scale show from the African continent. Rooted in both urban life and a mythical world, **Re:Incarnation** set the audience on fire and kicked off a series of performances by renowned artists from Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Congo-Brazzaville, Nigeria and Senegal. Odile Sankara and Aristide Tarnagda turned a staged reading of the novel **La plus secrète mémoire des hommes** by Mohamed Mbougar Sarr into a vibrant theatrical event. Étienne Minoungou delivered a masterful ode to the future of Africa in **Traces - Discours aux Nations Africaines**, written by the great Senegalese philosopher Felwine Sarr. At the FTA Playgrounds, he joined Haitian writer Stéphane Martelly for a conversation full of wisdom and hope. Towards the end of the Festival, nine local actors of African descent gave a spirited performance of **M'appelle Mohamed Ali**, elevating Dieudonné Niangouna's play to the status of a true manifesto for the theatre company La Sentinelle, a moment that will surely leave its mark in the history of Quebec theatre.

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Setting the stories free

In **Altamira 2042**, Brazilian artist Gabriela Carneiro Da Cunha orchestrated a powerful collective revolt through the symbolic destruction of the Belo Monte dam, challenging FTA's audiences to question their inaction in the face of the impending destruction of the Amazon rainforest (in which, incidentally, Canadian companies are involved). Korean theatre maker Jaha Koo and his rice cooker followed the thread of their lost heritage in **The History of Korean Western Theatre**. Angélique Willkie confirmed just how dazzling a performer she is, guided by choreographer Mélanie Demers in **Confession publique**. VOX, Centre de l'image contemporaine hosted a theatre laboratory by Inuit artists Laakkuluk Williamson Bathory and Vinnie Karetak, who shared a precious and devastating story in **Gaumma**. In **Them Voices**, Lara Kramer left the doors of the theater wide open, adding street sounds to her vibrant excavation of memories.

The dance piece **L'homme rare** by Ivorian choreographer Nadia Beugré deconstructed colonial views and the clichés of masculinity. In **Lavagem**, Alice Ripoll from Brazil presented delicate water games that proved how the body's poetry can rise above identity issues. Andrew Tay and Stephen Thompson staged a performative parade in **Make Banana Cry** which had audiences in stitches while questioning the very grounds for their laughter.

The rule of the imagination vs. the obsession with reality

FTA could not have dreamed of more lively notebooks on art and life than those composed by the seven artists gathered by PME-ART in **Adventures can be found anywhere, même dans la répétition**. For 8 days on end, they worked on rewriting the first volume of Susan Sontag's diary, inventing a generously performative practice of literature at the Leonard & Bina Ellen Gallery.

But perhaps the most indelible mark was left by Euripides Laskaridis' exuberance in the burlesque spectacle **Elenit**, a complete triumph of the imagination. And at the very end of the Festival, the mischievous rigor of the performers of **Laboratoire Poison** gave audiences an unforgettable lesson in history... and in theater. Through enlivening our spirits, the Festival opened a forum for debate.

FTA Playgrounds

With its ceiling of hanging flowers, the Quartier général welcomed festival-goers day and night. Two thematic days were focused on water and on Indigenous languages within arts practices. The FTA Clinics welcomed 6 dramaturges from Brazil, Belgium, Colombia, Cuba, Haiti and Italy who offered 23 private dramaturgy consultations to local artists. A fascinating discussion on producing dance and theatre in Latin America identified the challenges around touring artists and works throughout the continent. All in all, the Playgrounds activities were attended by **close to 3,000 spectators**.

This 16th edition, the first under the artistic vision of Martine Dennewald and Jessie Mill, already bears the seeds of future festivals. The unfolding of many different horizons. Curiosity about the world. An invitation to see things in a new way. Care for our relationships. A renewal of our sense of celebration. **See you from May 24 to June 8, 2023 for the 17th edition of Festival TransAmériques!**

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Gaumma © Maryse Boyce

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Festival TransAmérique wishes to thank its partners for their generous support

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Save the last dance © Vivien Gaumand

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