

Artist Statement, “Transference”

Vanessa Godden

The logo for 'iyaric' is written in a stylized, cursive pink font.

I developed a forty minute live performance, Transference, for the 7a*11D International Performance Festival. I was invited by the curatorial collective to produce and perform a new work during the festival in October 2024. The audio recordings collected during the RMG residency were used to construct a sound composition for the performance, Transference, produced in collaboration with Markham-based Visual and Sonic artist, James Knott. Transference encompassed my body traversing between containers of water that gradually shrink as I move between them. I begin inside a rain-water collection barrel, swirling my body through the saltwater that fills the container so the sounds interact with the sound composition. With each movement between containers, my body begins to overtake the surface area of the steel drum and the mixing bowl, displacing the saltwater within. The sounds blend my own field recordings from Trinidad and Tobago, collaboratively constructed experimental steel pan recordings, and a choir of sounds collected from Queer and Trans loved ones between Toronto, Texas (US), and Melbourne (Australia). The performance serves as a bridge between queer and Caribbean lineages.

Vanessa Godden (they, them) is a queer Indo-Caribbean and Euro-Canadian artist, educator, and curator. They are based in Tsí Tkarón:to/Toronto, the traditional territory of the Anishinaabe, including Mississaugas of the Credit, Chippewa, Haudenosaunee, and Wendat peoples. Godden’s transdisciplinary practice explores how personal histories and the body in relation to geographic space can be conveyed through oral and somatic storytelling in art. They draw from their multi-ethnic diasporic experiences to build multi-sensory performances, videos, sound installations, book art pieces, and net-art that unfurl the impacts of trauma on the body, connections to community, and tethers to culture. Godden is a sessional lecturer at universities across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. They are also the cofounder of the curatorial collective Diasporic Futurisms. They hold a PhD from the Victorian College of the Arts (Melbourne, Australia; 2020), an MFA from the Rhode Island School of Design (Providence, USA; 2014), and a BFA from the University of Houston (Houston, USA; 2012). Their work has been exhibited in group and solo exhibitions at organisations such as Articule in Montreal, The Fiona and Sidney Myer Gallery (formerly known as Margaret Lawrence Gallery) in Melbourne, Youkobo Artspace in Tokyo, ClampArt in New York City, and Aurora Picture Show in Houston.

Image credits

Vanessa Godden, Transference, 45 minute live performance, 2024, photography by Henry Chan











