

The Switch Collective Mini CV 2024

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/swiCH/

noun

1. A device for making or breaking the connection in an electrical current.
2. An act of adopting one policy or way of life, or choosing one type of item, in place of another; a change, especially a radical one.

verb

1. To change the position, direction or focus of.
2. beat or flick with or as if with a switch.

slang

1. A person who vacillates between dominant & submissive, or top & bottom positions within sexual roles, also known as 'versatile'.



The Switch Collective is an interdisciplinary performance troupe in Tk'aronto (canada) that has been co-producing new research-creation methodologies and roving political performance works for the public sphere since 2016. Switch centers the unique knowledge systems, activism and artistic expressions of Two spirit, Queer & Trans folks (2SQT), Black, Indigenous & Peoples of Color (BIPOC), and the lived wisdoms of intersectionality marginalized folks who varyingly experience the world as fat, mad, disabled, working class and/or criminalized. The Switch Collective pushes creative and political boundaries by blending mediums and moving art & ideas through unexpected public spaces. Switch resists art elitism and exclusivity, prioritizing audiences of everyday folks, strangers & arts-enthusiasts combined! Any sidewalk can be a stage. Any building, a projection screen. A procession leads into a parking lot for a grieving ritual. A shadow puppet leads the audience into a back alley for a dance party. Switch devises work through a decolonial and transformative justice framework of inquery that leverages rigorous archival research, deep site based learning, interdisciplinary collaboration and "switchy improv" to create new works in perpetual movement. Our collective composition shifts as needed and we always interweave new & local collaborators.

PERFORMANCES

- 2023 *Switching Regent(s) - Interdisciplinary 1hr performance - SummerWorks Festival, Regent park*
Created by fourteen artists during a four-day residency, this roving street performance through the Regent Park neighborhood used performance, projection, shadow puppetry, soundscape, poetry, movement, and song to explore themes of gentrification, resource distribution, community wellness and more.
- 2023 *Switching Djibuktuk - Performance experiment (1hr) with guest artists, Halifax*
Six artists used the Switch methodology to improvise responses to prompts about waves of migration through the region around Dalhousie University in Djibuktuk (or Halifax), using flocking, movement, improvised song, shadow, readings of thematic passages, and projection of archival images.
- 2022 *Switching Queen(s) - Interdisciplinary 2hr performance (3 sold out runs) - Toronto SummerWorks Festival, Parkdale*
Culminating multiple years of development with local residents, organizers, and activists, this roving street performance told a story of two local youth who accidentally open a portal that takes tem (and the audience) on a journey that blends past and present and future in the neighborhood of Parkdale. They encounter spirits, ghosts and ancestors; receive stories through dance, poetry, shadow puppetry, projection, and song;

explore the past and present of QTBIPOC, Mad/disabled, and class movements; and dream up radical liberatory futures.

- 2021 *Back Alley Galaxies - Audio performance-tour - Commissioned by B Current, Toronto*
This geolocated audio tour uses soundscapes of words, everyday life, music, and poetry to interrogate the challenges that the Parkdale neighborhood faces, originating in colonialism, capitalism, and gentrification.
- 2020 *Switching Queen(s) - Performance for video - Toronto SummerWorks Festival, Parkdale*
A performance (recorded) through the Toronto neighborhood of Parkdale that used interdisciplinary mediums to explore visible and invisible lines such as changing neighborhood boundaries, race & gender peripheries, waterways & oil pipelines, disappeared marginal spaces, beats & back allies.
- 2019 *Switch the Village - Restaging* (4 runs) - Buddies in Bad Times Theatre, The Village*
Back by invitation, this was an updated restaging of the 2018 production of *Switch the Village*.
- 2018 *Switch the Village - Roving 2 hr performance, The gay village & Buddies in Bad Times, Toronto*
Part of Pride Week, this 60-minute interdisciplinary roving public performance celebrated and memorialized the people and spaces of Toronto's gay village using video projections, audio, dance, procession & shadow puppetry.
- 2018 *"Can you hear a heartbeat?" - Performance experiment (2 runs) - Pride Festival, Toronto*
A grieving ritual about our community members who have disappeared from the village, consisting of a performance overlaid on live video projection & audio creation.

SWITCH-RUN WORKSHOPS AND RESIDENCIES

- 2023 *SummerWorks Festival Commission - Regent Park queer arts residency*
A four day residency, based in Regent Park, exploring Switch Methodologies of research and creation for queer, trans & two spirit artists or performers of diverse arts skills & practices. Residents explored Switch research tools & strategies for creating political public work, created deeply collaborative multi-disciplinary work, received technical support & creative mentorship, and learned audience & artist care strategies.
- 2023 *Canadian Association for Theatre Research - Switch Methodologies workshop, Halifax*
A 3.5 hour workshop (followed by a performance experiment) that introduced Switch Methodologies, offered historical context and thematic exploration of waves of migration that have passed through Halifax, and invited creative exploration through words and movement.

GRANTS, RESIDENCIES, ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

- 2020-2022 SummerWorks Festival Residency Program - Parkdale community engaged arts
- 2021 Canada Council for the Arts - Concept to Realization Project Grant
- 2020 Toronto Arts Council - Theatre Projects Grant
- 2020 Stratford Festival - The Lab Artist Residency
- 2019 Named one of NOW Magazine's top Pride performances to watch
- 2019 Ontario Arts Council Inter-Arts Project Production Grant
- 2019 Canada Council for the Arts - Research and Creation Grant
- 2018 Buddies in Bad Times Artist Lab - In kind space, mentorship & promotion
- 2017 Storefront Theatre Artist Support
- 2016 OAC Inter-Arts Creation Grant

Digital Portfolio: <http://www.switch-collective.com>

Collective Member Bios:

Naty Tremblay is a mad trans white-bodied interdisciplinary artist, educator, activist & permaculturist of french-canadian, metis & ashkenazi jewish ancestry. Naty brings 15+ years of research, study & experience collaborating on & leading performance training & projects, while also performing interactive and public political performance works. They leverage murals, video, audio, magic, puppetry, costume, wearable technology, projections, story, interventions, movement, and conceptual performance for community engaged & public works wherever possible. They are very passionate about transformative justice, and art for social & ecological justice centering marginalized voices.

Sedina Fiati is a multi award winning, Toronto based performer, producer, director, creator and activist for stage and screen. Proudly Black, queer and femme, Sedina is deeply invested in artistic work that explores the intersection between art and activism, either in form or structure or ideally both. Favourite and recent artistic projects: *The World Goes 'Round* (Nightwood Theatre, director), *Peace Camp* (Children's Peace Theatre, director 2019 - 2021, 2023), *Every Day She Rose* (Nightwood Theatre, co-director), *Feminist Fuck It Festival* (multidisciplinary festival, co-creator and co-producer), *Tokens* (performer, web series, Canadian Screen Award Winner - Best Supporting Performance). Sedina recently completed 2.5 years as Artist-Activist in Residence at Nightwood Theatre and is a proud founding member of the Black Pledge Collective.

daniel jelani ellis is a multidisciplinary artist raised in Jamaica by a village of theatre artists, poets, and educators. His art practice includes performance-installation creation, playwriting, dub poetry, and acting. danjelani challenges colonial cultural authority by examining and exploring the ways this authority clashes, connects, and intersects with Afro-diasporic traditions and methodologies. As a Black queer immigrant he is committed to celebrating those of us who live within the margins.

Lexi Sproule is a queer Tkaronto-based artist, producer, stage manager, and teacher who is descended from Italian immigrants and Irish/Scottish settlers of Turtle Island. They create and support political, community-centric art that heals and transforms. Lexi specializes in production and technical support on outdoor (and roving) productions, biomyth monodramas, and 'emergency stage managing'. Their personal artistic practice is interdisciplinary with a focus on writing short fiction.

Faith-Ann Mendes is a writer and performer who has developed a strong foundation in storytelling, character development, and the intricacies of dramatic structure through extensive work in Theatre at Buddies in Bad Times Theatre's Rhubarb Festival, Watah Theatre, The SummerWorks Festival, Nightwood Theatre's Groundswell Festival, and SoulPepper Theatre's Writers Circle. Her experience in creating compelling narrative structure has allowed Faith-Ann to develop a unique voice and perspective as a writer.. She possesses a deep appreciation for the power of storytelling and the ability to create authentic and relatable characters.

