



# MOCEAN DANCE

*Discover  
the dance  
found in  
everyday  
things*

# PLAY



**CHOREOGRAPHIC  
DIRECTION BY:**

**Jacinte  
Armstrong**

**CREATED AND PERFORMED BY:**

Gillian Seaward-Boone  
Lauren Runions  
Camille-Zoé Valcourt-Synnott  
Jacinte Armstrong

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By Breton Lalama

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WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY  
RAVEN DAUDA



MARCH 12 –  
MARCH 24, 2024

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# LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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PLAY takes place in Mi'kma'ki, the unceded, unsundered territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We have gratitude for this land, and respect and appreciation for its many generations of caretakers.

## MESSAGE FROM CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

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Welcome to **PLAY!** We are thrilled to share this new exploratory work by Jacinte Armstrong. Jacinte is an artistic force in Halifax's dance community and a longtime Mocean collaborator, continually expanding her artistic practice which playfully questions what dance is and can be. PLAY is part of an axis of activities in Mocean's 22nd season that revolve around the theme of folding in and sweeping out. Folding in, we imagine new ways of catalyzing the work of dance artists. Sweeping out, we embody new ways to amplify dance as a practice of exchange. With this in mind, it is with pleasure that we invite you to experience dance performance in a playful new way.



Susanne Chui, Co-Artistic Director



Sara Coffin, Co-Artistic Director

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CHOREOGRAPHER

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How are we choreographed by the things around us? How can we be inspired to move by the “things” in our daily lives? What “dances” arise from touching tiny objects? Or handling large colourful ones? How can audiences and artists move together over the course of a performance? How can we also maintain a sense of humour together?

These are a few of the questions I have explored through the making of PLAY. Over my life as a dancer and performer, I have done many performances in movement (obviously), and my wish is to share the aspects of that experience that I love with others. Visiting an art gallery, for example, is an embodied experience in which we can encounter art with our bodies in motion. Paradoxically, watching dance often requires us to stay seated and still. In PLAY, audience members are invited to move with performers, with the show intended to feel like both a workshop and a performance at once. Our objective is to share in the pleasures of movement and to practice thinking with our bodies in a performance setting, with all of the excitement and specialness that a performance brings.

An extension of my MFA work at NSCAD University, PLAY explores the impromptu creation of Visual Scores and subsequent interpretations of them, use of objects at small and large scales, the building of collective imagination, and sharing the gift of attention. Original explorations for this work took place between myself and other artists online via zoom until we were able to come together in the studio, eventually moving outdoors and onto the streets.

I would like to express my great appreciation for all of the audience members here to share this experience with us. I would also like to thank each of the artists who participated in earlier stages of this research, mentors and collaborating artists Lois Brown and Norm Adams, my friends and family- especially my partner (and proofreader) James Forren, Kat MacCormack at Eastern Front Theatre for the invaluable support and development of my performance work over the past two seasons, and, of course, to the whole team at Mocean Dance for everything that has gone into bringing this piece to life. Special thanks to Susanne and Sara for all of their support over the past 10 years, and specifically in bringing my vision for this piece to fruition since our earliest conversations about it in 2021. Last, but definitely not least, I am extraordinarily grateful to my incredible team of co-creators Gillian, Lauren, and Camille, whose ongoing creative input, improvisation, artistry, talent, dedication, commitment, sense of humour, style, presence, support, intelligence, and generosity have made this piece possible. Without you this work could absolutely not exist. Thank you so much, and THANK YOU EVERYONE!! I'm sure the credit music must be rolling by now.

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# PLAY

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**RUNNING TIME: APPROX. 60 MINS**

**CHOREOGRAPHIC DIRECTION:** Jacinte Armstrong

**CREATED WITH PERFORMERS:** Gillian Seaward-Boone, Lauren Runions, Camille-Zoé Valcourt-Synnott, Jacinte Armstrong

**MENTOR:** Lois Brown

**RESEARCHING ARTISTS:** Norm Adams, Mallory Amirault, Solène Bernier, Laura Bucchi, Lou Cambell, Marcia Connelly, Louis-Charless Dionne, Leigh Gillam, Alicia Grant, D'Arcy Gray, Sara Hartlan-Rowe, Danielle Jubiak, Sebastian Labelle, Matthew Lumley, Andrew MacKelvie, Coral Maloney, Kim Morgan, I'thandi Munro, Gloire Paluku, Nancy Price, Analise Prodor, Julie Robert, Becky Siamon, Leah Skerry

**REHEARSAL SUPPORT:** Susanne Chui, Sara Coffin

**SOUND DESIGN:** Norman Adams

**MUSIC:** All music composed by Norman Adams except: *Diode* by Strata (Norman Adams and Brandon Auger); *Chickadees* by Mike Vargas; *My Misshapen Ear VI* by Joe Sorbara; *Nocturne Op. 9, No. 2 in E-Flat Major* by Frederic Chopin

**OBJECT DESIGN AND COSTUMES:** Jacinte Armstrong with the Cast

**SEAMSTRESS:** Alyson Samways

**TECHNICAL DIRECTOR/LIGHTING DESIGNER:** Benoit Whitehead Gravel

**TECHNICIAN:** Alexa Kriste

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANT:** Sara Coffin

**MEDIA RELATIONS:** Sheila Duggan

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Kevin MacCormack

**VIDEOGRAPHY:** Maximilian Flint

**GRAPHIC DESIGN:** Co. & Co.

**ASL INTERPRETATION:** Society Of Deaf and Hard of Hearing Nova Scotians

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to Halifax Dance, Halifax Public Library and Library Programmer Shelby Kennedy, NSCAD, All Nations Church, our supporters, volunteers, and staff, and a heartfelt thanks to the collaborating artists and audiences who *PLAYed* with us!

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# BIOGRAPHIES

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## JACINTE ARMSTRONG

Jacinte Armstrong is an Acadian artist based in K'jipuktuk/Halifax, NS. Her work explores embodied practice through performance, choreography, collaboration, and curation, communicating the experience of the body in relation to objects, materials, and people. Jacinte is Artistic Director and

co-founder of SiNS (Sometimes in Nova Scotia) dance, Administrative and Artistic Producer at suddenlyLISTEN, and performs regularly with Mocean Dance. From 2014-18 she was Artistic Director of Kinetic Studio, presenting an annual season of contemporary dance workshops and performances in Nova Scotia, and since 2015 has been part of [8DAYS8JOURS](#), an annual gathering of Canadian choreographers.

In 2016 Jacinte received a [Nova Scotia Masterworks Award](#) as a dancer with Mocean Dance in Canvas 5 x 5 choreographed by Tedd Robinson, and was awarded an Established Artist Recognition Award by the Nova Scotia Arts and Culture Partnership Council. She has an MFA in Performance from NSCAD University (2020) and is studying to become a certified Laban Movement Analysis (CMA). She is a member of CADA, the CDA, and the DTRC.



## LAUREN RUNIONS

Lauren Runions is a dance artist, choreographer, and facilitator based in Tkarón:to + K'jipuktuk. As a dancer, they have worked with inspiring choreographers including Alysa Pires, Brian Solomon, Courtnae Bowman (Cadence Progressive Contemporary Ballet), Dave Wilson, Jacinte Arm-

strong, Melanie Kloetzel, and Lydia Zimmer. Lauren is the artistic director of dance project I/O Movement which offers performances, community workshops, and process-based residencies. Through this project, they have hosted public workshops including *Movement at the Mall* (Art Starts), *Dancing + Drawing* (I/O Movement), *Mapping Inside/Outside* (Gallery 1265), and *Field Guide for Performance in Public Space* (Maximum City). Lauren has also choreographed public works including *Intervening "A Sudden Beginning"* (Carlos Bunga, MOCA 2020), *Stories* (Nuit Blanche Toronto 2022), and *MEANDER/DRIFT* (with Marite Kuus and Lou Campbell, Nocturne 2023). Lauren is currently completing their MFA at NSCAD and is a percussion-enthusiast/jazzhead.

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## GILLIAN SEAWARD-BOONE

A graduate of l'Ecole de Danse Contemporaine de Montréal (EDCM), Gillian spent nearly a decade with O Vertigo as a full company member under the direction of Ginette Laurin, during which she performed across Europe, Asia and North America. Gillian returned to the Maritimes in 2013

and has since performed works by Serge Bennethan, Marie-Josée Chartier, Sara Coffin, Sharon Moore and Parts+Labour\_Danse for Mocean Dance. Gillian has collaborated with local artists Alexis Cormier, Sarah Murphy, Phin Performing Arts, Lilion Quarmyne, Leah Skerry and Lydia Zimmer and is a founding member of the Home Ex Artist Collective in partnership with IOTA Art Institute. She is currently in creation for new works by Lydia Zimmer, Lisa Phinney-Langley, Rebecca Lazier (in collaboration with Janet Echelman), and Sharon Moore. Offstage, Gillian works as a rehearsal director, teaches technique classes to the professional community and is an artist-in-residence at Halifax Dance.

Gillian has had the pleasure of collaborating with Jacinte Armstrong and SiNS for several branches of research including their augmented reality work Version 2.0 (in collaboration with James Forren), Found in Translation, and several chapters of exploration supporting her newest work, PLAY.



## CAMILLE-ZOÉ VALCOURT-SYNNOTT

Camille-Zoé Valcourt-Synnott (she/her) (she/her) is a multidisciplinary artist and arts worker from Quebec (QC). She graduated with a BFA (Print Media) from Concordia University in 2018 and an MFA from NSCAD University in 2020. Her performances reflect on the value of the artist's

work, perceptions of productivity and where life and art meet. She is interested in the intersections between labor, gender and class dynamics. Her performances and text-based works have been shown in artist-run centers and galleries across Canada.

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# ABOUT MOCEAN DANCE

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Based in Kijipuktuk/Halifax, Nova Scotia Mocean Dance is an award-winning contemporary dance company. Led by Co-Artistic Directors Susanne Chui and Sara Coffin, Mocean provides fertile ground for artistic endeavours and potential in the field of dance. We share perspectives of our region and create opportunities to engage the local ecology and connect to the national performing arts community. Through our work, we aim to support Halifax as a hotspot for creation, research, experimentation, collaboration, and performance. Recognized nationally as a leading dance company from the Atlantic Region, the company was honoured with The Lieutenant Governor of Nova Scotia Masterworks Art Award in 2016 for Canvas 5 x 5, which was the first time this esteemed provincial award was given to a Nova Scotia dance work. Founded in 2001 by Carolle Crooks Fernando, Sarah Rozee, Sara Harrigan, Alicia Orr MacDonald, and Lisa Phinney Langley, Mocean has been a proud resident company of Halifax Dance since 2002.

[www.moceandance.com](http://www.moceandance.com)

**CO-ARTISTIC DIRECTORS:** Susanne Chui & Sara Coffin

**COMMUNICATIONS AND PRODUCTION ASSISTANT:** Sam Penner

**FINANCE ASSOCIATE:** Lisa Langley

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS:** Pamela Scott-Crace (Past Chair), Leah Skerry (Vice Chair), Natasha Fletcher (Treasurer/Secretary), Sansom Marchand, Ewa Jachimowicz, Andrea Smillie



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