



CALL FOR DANCE ARTISTS

Seeking dance artists for *Dancing Kmitkinu*, a new collaboration between Mocean Dance and Nestuitasi Storytelling

DEADLINE: Friday, February 16, 2024, midnight AST

Opportunity: Seeking five dance artists to collaborate on *Dancing Kmitkinu*, a new creation project and collaboration between Mocean Dance and Nestuitasi Storytelling.

Phase one research and creation rehearsals, **April 2-19, 2024**, with choreographic research led by Sarah Prosper, in collaboration with shalan joudry.

Please see below for project information, expression of interest application process, and project sharing sessions.

****NEW**** For this project Mocean is piloting an Artist Care Fund supported by Balancing Act Canada's Level UP! program. See information below.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

The project aims to create a live, multi-sensory performance inspired by shalan joudry's literary poem *Kmitkinu* ("our homeland").

From the Mi'kmaw word for "our homeland," the poem *Kmitkinu* weaves together Mi'kmaw history and perspectives, with calls for Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples to move forward in solidarity.

Dancing Kmitkinu aims to explore and embody the words, images, and important messages of the poem.

The creative team for *Dancing Kmitkinu* includes shalan joudry, Sarah Prosper and Mocean Dance's Co-Artistic Directors, Susanne Chui and Sara Coffin. As we aim to weave more voices into the project, additional choreographers and collaborators will likely be added to the project as it develops.

This project is supported in part by Pier 21 Museum of Immigration, who is hosting shalan joudry as Artist-in-Residence from January-May 2024, working on various stages of the project.

Phase one research and creation, planned for **April 2-19, 2024**, will be a 3-week, choreographic research led by Sarah Prosper and shalan joudry, and will end with a work-in-progress showing at Pier 21. The intention is to continue creation in 2024-2025 and production in Fall 2025 (dates to be confirmed).

Please see additional information below about the project's history and intentions.

PROJECT INFORMATION SESSIONS

- **In-person: Friday, February 9, 10:30-12:00 at Pier 21, Chiodo Room**
- **Virtual: Saturday, February 10, 12:00-1:30 on Zoom**

To share information about the project and to meet dance artists, we are hosting two information sessions (dates above). At these sessions, project leaders will share the inspiration for *Dancing Kmitkinu*, and invite participants to engage in guided movement exercises. Artists interested in being considered are strongly encouraged to attend one of the two sessions prior to sending their expression of interest.

Register for the information sessions [HERE](#).

CONTRACT DETAILS AND ELIGIBILITY

Contract Dates: April 2-19, 2024

- **April 2-5:** Four-day rehearsal period at **Ross Creek Centre for the Arts (Canning, NS)**. Tuesday-Friday, 10:00am-4:00pm (with 1 hr break); 20 hrs total at \$35/hr; accommodation, food, and travel covered.

- **April 8-19:** Two-week rehearsal period at **Halifax Dance**. Monday-Friday, 10:00am-4:00pm (with 1 hr break); 50 hrs total at \$35/hr. Work-in-progress showing at Pier 21 (date TBC).

Project Eligibility: Open to experienced dance and/or movement-based artists based in Mi'kma'ki. Limited support will be available for artists travelling from outside of Kjiptuk/Halifax, however we cannot guarantee full coverage of travel expenses. To align with the intention of this work, including cross-cultural exchange, we are seeking both Indigenous and non-Indigenous dance artists to join the team, with a minimum of two Indigenous artists to join Sarah and shalan as performers.

We are working to support greater equity and accessibility in performing arts practice and encourage artists from all backgrounds and intersection identities to apply. We encourage artists to identify any accessibility supports that may be required to take part in this project.

Qualities we are seeking:

- Versatility as a performer with the ability to adapt to various movement styles, creative prompts, and physical expressions.
- Enjoy working in an emergent creative environment, with input from multiple creative perspectives.
- Strong dance or movement background
- Experience or comfort with spoken text and singing
- Flexible can-do attitude with a willingness to jump in where needed.
- Strong interpersonal and communication skills with the ability to hold challenging topics, particularly around the history of colonization in Mi'kma'ki.
- A deep connection to Mi'kma'ki and a desire to explore and share their connection to Mi'kma'ki and their responsibility to this land and its Indigenous people.

HOW TO APPLY

Expression of interest: Artists interested applying for the project, please fill out this [Expression of Interest form](#) including links to videos and a C.V. (max. 2 pages).

Alternatively, artists may submit a short video or audio file considering the questions/prompts in the Form (maximum 8 minutes). Please send video/audio files to susanne@moceandance.com

If you face barriers to completing the application or would like assistance, please reach out to Susanne Chui, Mocean's Co-Artistic Director or shalan joudry for assistance or

for alternative application methods: susanne@moceandance.com,
admin@nestuitasi.com

Selection Process: Expressions of Interest will be reviewed and selected by project leaders, shalan joudry and Sarah Prosper, and Mocean's Co-Artistic Directors, Susanne Chui and Sara Coffin.

DEADLINE: Friday, February 16, 2024, midnight AST

Notification: by February 26, 2024

Everyone who applies will receive a response

ACCESSIBILITY

As part of Balancing Act Canada's *Level UP!* program, Mocean is piloting an **Artist Care Fund** through Phase 1 of the *Dancing Kmitkinu* project, intended to support greater equity and accessibility in performing arts practice. The fund will address costs associated with participating in the work, as well as gaps in project-based working models. Selected artists will be eligible to receive partial financial support for certain costs incurred during the project, including (but not limited to): travel and parking, childcare/eldercare, and physical/mental health support.

The Artist Care Fund will also be applied to our Project Information Sessions.

Artists who attend our information sessions have the opportunity to access support for travel and parking expenses, childcare/eldercare expenses, and/or other expenses. Artists are invited to self-identify their needs on the registration form. Amounts will be dispensed after the sessions via e-transfer; as funds are limited, we cannot guarantee support for the full amount requested, however we will ensure all who apply receive some level of support.

If you have questions or concerns, or require an alternative payment method, please contact us directly at communications@moceandance.com

ADDITIONAL PROJECT INFORMATION

Artistic statement from shalan joudry:

The original poem moves through the eras of pre-colonization through colonization in Mi'kma'ki. The meditations on grief, truth-seeking, and communal healing are echoed in the landscape's own healing. The poem was translated into other languages so that there are a total of thirteen - to fit on the back of a turtle. It was featured at Nocturne (Halifax) as an audio installation in the Halifax Public Gardens in October 2020, and will soon be published as a limited edition hand-pressed book.

I am honoured to be working with Mocean and Sarah Prosper on this. Collaborating with diverse choreographers and dancers, finding other modes of embodying the original intentions of this poem is timely. This project is an act of peace-building and healing in itself, for participants and hopefully for the audience as well.

For more info:

- [Listen to shalan's podcast featuring the 13 languages of the poem, Kmitkinu](#)
- [Listen to shalan's conversation on CBC's Halifax Mainstreet talking about Kmitkinu and the Pier 21 Residency](#)
- [Visit shalan's website](#)

Artistic Statement from Mocean Dance:

As an artistic catalyst for professional dance in Mi'kma'ki / Nova Scotia, Mocean is deeply invested in supporting the creation of works that represent and celebrate the region's richly pluralistic identity. *Dancing Kmitkinu*, builds on an ongoing relationship with shalan joudry and Sarah Prosper, which has included creation, outreach, and mentorship projects over the past three years. *Dancing Kmitkinu* is part of an intentional effort to support the growth of Indigenous-led dance artists in this region, as an action towards the critical work of reconciliation and decolonization. We are excited to work with shalan and Sarah to build healthy relationships and create robust, thought-provoking, and meaningful artistic work for the benefit of all in Mi'kma'ki.

About shalan joudry and Nestuita'si Storytelling:

shalan joudry is a Mi'kmaw mother and narrative artist working in many mediums. She is a poet, playwright, podcast producer, storyteller and actor, as well as a cultural interpreter. Having worked as a professional oral storyteller for well over two decades, her first full-length play, *Elapultiek*, was commissioned and then produced by Two Planks and a Passion Theatre which toured in 2018 and 2019. shalan's second book of poetry, *Waking Ground* (Gaspereau Press 2020) was short-listed for multiple literary awards. Her solo one-woman theatrical show, *Koqm*, debuted on the King's Theatre Stage, Annapolis Royal, in 2021 then toured the province in 2022. shalan lives in her home territory of Kespukwitk (southwest Nova Scotia) with her family in their community of L'sitkuk (Bear River First Nation) where she is researching and working on reclaiming her L'nu language.

Nestuita'si Storytelling is led by shalan joudry, a small L'nu (Mi'kmaw) multi-disciplinary arts company focused on retelling cultural, ecological and personal stories that get to the heart of deeply human truths. From oral storytelling, podcasts, to full theatrical work, we are grounded in what it means to "re-member". (Nestuita'si means "I recall/recollect" in the Mi'kmaw language.)

About Sarah Prosper:

Wisunn na Sarah Prosper (she/they/nekmo), Mikmaq/L'nu e'pite's of the Eskasoni Mi'kmaq First Nation. Amalkewinu (dancer) holds a BSc Therapeutic Recreation, is a MA in Leisure Studies student, and a proclaimed community artist of the Wabanaki East Coast. Her first work created as an artistic director and choreographer is the Merritt Award winning show *SAMQWAN* in 2021-2023 at Highland Arts, Neptune, Stratford Festival and 2023 Canada Games. Dancing with Mocean Dance, Kinetic Studios, House of Eights, Painted Dance Co, Nestuita'si, and community focused initiatives, Prosper's community work varies between wellness and healing focused methods specific to community needs, and shares a curated dance workshop "Moving in Mi'kma'ki." Prosper collaborates, creates, and moves with ms+t no'kmaq, all her relations, in a fluid identity uplifting pursuit. An award winner of the 2022 Nova Scotia Indigenous Artist Recognition Award, she performs and creates on National stages in collaboration with world renowned artists. Prosper's practice encompasses an Indigenous/Mi'kmaq lens that deepens the threads of respect and reciprocity to dance, movement, social sciences, social justice, mental health & the land. Her work intends to connect, rebuild, and unite.

About Mocean Dance:

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

Mocean Dance creates, collaborates, and performs in Mi'kma'ki, the ancestral home and unceded territory of the Mi'kmaq people. We have gratitude for this land, and respect and appreciation for its many generations of caretakers. As an organization, we commit to learning what it means to be Treaty People who move forward together in peace and friendship.