

Written by:  
Marie-Ève Milot and  
Marie-Claude St-  
Laurent

Translated by:  
Rhiannon Collett

Directed by:  
Emma Tibaldo



# STILL LIFE

OCTOBER 28-NOVEMBER 9, 2024

**TALISMAN**  
THEATRE



Conseil  
des arts  
et des lettres  
du Québec



**LA CHAPELLE**  
SCÈNES CONTEMPORAINES

## CONTENT WARNING :

**This production contains depictions of anxiety and references to sexual violence**

**ARTISTIC NOTE :** We are delighted that Emma Tibaldo has agreed to direct 'Still Life'. A co-founder of Talisman Theatre, Emma directed its first six productions. She left Talisman to become Artistic and Executive Director of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal (2008-2021).

—Lyne Paquette, Artistic Director of Talisman Theatre.

**SYNOPSIS :** *Still Life* is a brilliant study of a writer struggling with general anxiety disorder. Severely shaken by a panic attack on her birthday, she is bewildered as to the cause--she seems afraid of fear itself and becomes a shut-in! Alarmed by her retreat from society, her family and friends gather at her door to coax her out.

The 30-year-old finds inspiration in the stories of women artists, like the virtuosity of photographer, Nidaa Badwan, working in a one-room apartment with a single ray of light. She promises herself that she will only leave her apartment when the time is right. But the apartment's thin walls betray her every move. She feels trapped, as if in a labyrinth.

A candid look at anxiety, this feminist play criticizes performance-oriented culture. *Still Life* illustrates how society responds when one falls short of the accomplishments expected at life's first major milestone. It proposes that art can heal the past and provide hope for the future.

**DIRECTOR'S NOTE :** "It's beautiful how art can wake the dead, and give them permission to imagine themselves alive; amongst the living." This is the last line of the play, and for me, marks the beginning of new possibilities for humanity, and women in particular. I love this play because it embraces art in all its forms. It demands visual abstraction, soundscapes, movement, chorus work, precision and chaos. It asks that we use all our senses to explore the world around us, science, ritual, mathematics, psychology, and above all else, art as an expression of self.

For many of us in theatre, these last few years have been difficult. We had to take a hard look at what gave our art meaning. *Still Life* speaks to that search. It examines what we value in ourselves and challenges us to dig deeper, think further, beyond the confines of our self-imposed limitations.

The play takes a candid look at anxiety and depression, experienced by a woman, who cannot define its source, yet she is dying. The play was created with extensive research in collaboration with le Centre d'études sur le stress humain, and it dares us to move toward the open door, to shed the imprisonment that we have internalized as women.

This play questions, and examines the spaces that women occupy. It imagines the spaces we create to feel safe, to feel in control of our destiny, to be authentic. But do these spaces exist or must we create new ones through art, must we imagine differently?

I love this play because it leads me to think and feel deeply. It ignites my imagination, as a director-dramaturg-audience member, and as a damaged soul walking this earth looking for better.

— Emma Tibaldo, Director of *Still Life*

**Thank you for joining us! Enjoy the show!**

## About the authors

Marie-Ève Milot and Marie-Claude St-Laurent are the Artistic Directors of Théâtre de l’Affamée. Mandated to invest in a new Feminist/feminine theatre, they create complex characters that can be identified outside the binary mode of gender, question normativity and provoke new possibilities. Active members of Femmes pour l'Équité en Théâtre (F.E.T.), they co-wrote the *Jeu* magazine call to action, addressing the under-representation of women in theatre, and created reference documents for students and faculty about the under-representation of women and the systems that marginalize them. They have written nine works together including *Cour à scrap – Portrait d’une famille reconstituée*, *Débranchée* (shortlisted for the prix Louise-LaHaye 2017) and *Guérilla de l’ordinaire* and *Clandestines* (shortlisted for the prix Michel-Tremblay 2020 and 2023). Their essay *La coalition de la robe*, co-written with Marie-Claude Garneau, was published in Editions du remue-ménage (2017).

## About the Playwright **MARIE-ÈVE MILOT**



Since graduating l'École de théâtre du Cégep de Saint-Hyacinthe, Marie-Ève Milot has been deeply involved in the theatre world. As an actress, she has collaborated with Hugo Bélanger (*Princess Turandot*, *Pinocchio*, *Peter et Alice*), Marc Beupré (*Ce samedi il pleuvait*), Serge Denoncourt (*Thérèse et Pierrette à l'École des Saints-Anges*), Geneviève L. Blais (*Si les oiseaux*, *Local B-1717*) and Sébastien David (*Scratch*). She was seen at le Petit Théâtre de La Colline in Paris, in *Les barbelés* by Annick Lefebvre, staged by Alexia Boerger, and then remounted the show at the Théâtre de Quat'Sous. She can be seen on large and small screen (*Les pays d'en haut*, *5e rang*).

## About the Playwright **MARIE-CLAUDE ST-LAURENT**



Marie-Claude is an actress, playwright, screenwriter and acting coach on film sets, literary co-director of the La Nef theater collection at Éditions du remue-ménage, and artistic co-director with Marie-Ève Milot of Théâtre de l'Affamée. She has been part of the cast of over 15 theatrical and several television series, including *Après le déluge*, *Désobéir* and *Audrey est revenue*. She coauthored 9 plays with Marie-Ève Milot, and collaborated on the study conducted by RÉQEF researchers on the place of women in theatre and at the Chantier du theatre during ESPACE GO's Chantier féministe in 2019. She is currently working on the film adaptation of Nathalie Doummar's plays *Sissi* and *Mama*.

## About the Translator **RHIANNON COLLETT**



Rhiannon Collett (they/them) is an award-winning non-binary playwright, performer, director and translator based in Vancouver. They are interested in interdisciplinary creation processes, sexual labour, gender performativity and science fiction. Their works include *Miranda & Dave Begin Again*, *Wasp*, *Tragic Queens*, and *The Kissing Game*, an urban fantasy revenge drama that explores love, betrayal, friendship and identity commissioned by Youtheatre (Montreal) and Young People's Theatre (Toronto). It won the Montreal English Theatre Award for Outstanding New Text. Rhiannon's work has been presented internationally at the LungA festival in Seyðisfjörður, Iceland, and at the Festival les Petites Formes in Fort-de-France, Martinique. Last year they were artist-in-residence at the Mauser Eco House in Costa Rica, and the Performing Arts Forum in St. Erme, France.

## About the Director EMMA TIBALDO



Emma is Artist in Residence at Concordia University, Theatre Department. She is Associate Artist with Poverty Cove Theatre in NL, and a freelance Director and Dramaturg. She is the former Artistic and Executive Director of Playwrights' Workshop Montreal (PWM), where for fourteen years she dramaturgically collaborated on many plays, most recently *Mizushobai* by Julie Tamiko Manning and *Thy Woman's Weeds* by Erin Shields.

Emma has directed new Canadian plays across the country such as *Grace* by Megan Gail Coles, *I Don't Even Miss You* by Elena Belyea, *Okinum* by Emilie Monnet (co-director), *SCUM: A Manifesto* by S.E. Grummett and Caitlin Zacharias, *The Baklawa Recipe* by Pascale Rafie, *Refuge* by Mary Vingoe, *Falling Trees* by Megan Gail Coles. In 2005, she co-founded Talisman Theatre. She co-created *Skin*, a new performance piece with the The Bakery.

Emma is a recipient of LMDA's Elliott Hayes Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dramaturgy, and the Conseil Québécois du théâtre Prix Sentinelle.

Emma is a graduate of Concordia University's Theatre Department and the National Theatre School of Canada's Directing Program, where she has been a guest artist. She feeds her inner (and outer) punk rocker by playing in the family bands The Tibaldos and Dépanneurds.

# TALISMAN THEATRE

A Talisman Theatre production of

# STILL LIFE

#stilllife\_play

Directed by  
**EMMA TIBALDO**

Written by  
**MARIE-ÈVE MILOT &  
MARIE-CLAUDE ST-LAURENT**

Translated by  
**RHIANNON COLLETT**

Performed by  
**CARA REBECCA**

Performed by  
**JOEY LESPÉRANCE  
ANTON MAY                      NORA GUERCH**

Performed by  
**CARY LAWRENCE**

Set Design  
**LYNE PAQUETTE**

Lighting Design  
**LUCIE BAZZO**

Sound Design  
**JACKIE GALLANT**

Movement Design  
**LESLIE BAKER**

Costume Design  
**FRUZSINA LANYI**

Stage Manager  
**ELISABETH NYVEEN**

Publicist  
**RAISON D'ÊTRE MEDIA**

Social Media  
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Social Media  
**ANTON MAY**

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## THE CAST

### CARA REBECCA (THIRTY-YEAR-OLD)



Cara is a Montreal-based, award-winning, and META nominated actor, fight director, and emerging director. She was recently selected for the Canadian Guild of Stage Directors and Choreographers Mentorship program, and was Assistant Director for *Sakura* (Centaur Theatre). Select acting credits include: *Open House*, *Extra/Beautiful/U* (Infini theatre); *The Importance of Being Earnest*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (St Lawrence); *Fall On Your Knees* (Canadian Stage/ Neptune/ NAC/ Grand); *Cowgirl Up* (ATP); *Indecent* (Segal). Screen: *Out Standing* (2025). Select fight direction credits: *POTUS* (Segal), *The Flood* (Imago), *Bone Cage* (Assembly), *Ladies Day* (New Stuff), *Sugar Baby* (TMU), and *When We Meet Again* (Timescape). Cara is a graduate of the National Theatre School, McGill, and is accredited with the Academy of Dramatic Combat. She co-founded the Ragtag Collective.

### CARY LAWRENCE (MOTHER)



Cary is a graduate of Ecole Jacques Lecoq in Paris and has a BA from Bishop's University. She has worked in film, TV, voice and theatre in both official languages. Cary was part of the ensemble cast of *SEEDS (GRAINS)* the documentary theatre piece written by Annabel Soutar, which toured the country in French and English, and was on a US tour when it was cut short due to COVID. Cary was last seen in *Feather Gardens* at Hudson Village Theatre. When not acting, Cary teaches yoga.

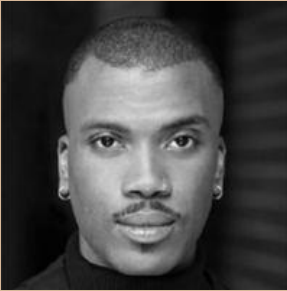


## JOEY LESPÉRANCE (FATHER)



Joey is a graduate of Studio 58 in Vancouver and has now relocated to Montreal, sa ville natale. He is recognized as a performer with a physical bent and has performed in many Canadian theaters. He has been nominated multiple times for the Jessie Richardson Theatre Awards in Vancouver. He received the Best Actor Award in 2015 for his role in *À toi pour toujours ta Marie-Lou* Théâtre la Seizième. Other theatre credits include; *Me Love Bingo*, Arts Club, *The Café*, ITSAZOO Theatre, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, Bard on The Beach, *Nos Repairs* Théâtre la Seizième, *Holiday Elbow Room Café*, ZeeZee theatre, *Hosana* UCB, *The Empress and the Prime Minister* Theatre Network, *Le Soulier* Théâtre la Seizième, *šxʷʔaṁət (Home)* Theatre for living, *The Hunger Room*, Staircase theatre and many more.

## ANTON MAY (LANDLORD)



Anton (he/they) is a British born, now Montreal-based multidisciplinary artist. They are an honours graduate from Dawson College's Professional Theatre Program and alumnae of BTW Artist Mentorship Program. They most recently completed PWM Young Creators Unit and AMPlified, developing two new plays (*A Boy's Love* and *The Play That Wrote Itself*). Selected Credits include: *Choir Boy*, Arts Club Canadian Stage, *Beautiful: The Carole King Musical*, Drayton Entertainment, *All Shall Be Well*, Repercussion Theatre, *The Love Trial*, Purple Divine, *Kinky Boots*, Juste Pour Rire, *Tick Tick Boom*, Rentrobuff Prod., *Romeo and Juliet*, Repercussion Theatre, and *Shrek the Musical*, WISTA.

## NORA GUERCH (BEST FRIEND)



With a background in comparative literature and cinema studies from the University of Montreal, Nora graduated in 2013 from the École supérieure de Théâtre de l'UQAM, acting program. This performer, of Moroccan origin, began her career with a leading role with Le Groupe de la Veillée, at Théâtre Prospero in *The ontological proof of my existence* by Joyce Carol Oates. This was followed by rich theatre collaborations with Porte Parole, Theater INK, Volte 21 and Théâtre de l'Instant. Nora has also been perfecting her craft in front of a camera, and can be seen in *Transplant*, *Chouchou* and *Cerebrum*.

## THE DESIGNERS

### LESLIE BAKER, MOVEMENT DESIGNER



Artistic director of The Bakery, Leslie has worked internationally as a creator, teacher, performer and movement coach since the 1990's. She is devoted to the use of the body, visual and aural signifiers in performance communication. Leslie has a rich collaborative history, notably, a ten-year collaboration with Robert Wilson. Other collaborators include Richard Foreman, Peter Bottazzi, Tedi Tafel, Micheline Chevrier, Emma Tibaldo, Joseph Shragge and Bettina Hoffman. Her solo-creation, *Fuck You! You Fucking Perv!* (Le Théâtre La Licorne) won three META's. In 2019 she directed Talisman Theatre's *Clean Slate*. This production received six META nominations. She has taught the Six Viewpoints and a physical approach to acting at the National Theatre School of Canada, Concordia University, Studio 303 and the University of Costa Rica, amongst others.

## **LYNE PAQUETTE, SET DESIGNER**



A graduate of the National Theatre School (2003), she began as an Assistant Designer at the Stratford Shakespeare Festival, and served as an intern at Michael Curry Designs. Lyne has since designed for many theatre, dance, puppet, and opera productions in Montreal. She has designed sets and costumes for Talisman productions since 2005. Set design is Lyne's second career: after graduating from McGill (1987), she accumulated a decade's worth of experience as a Professional Engineer managing large industrial projects. Lyne is a founder of Talisman Theatre, serving as its Artistic and Executive Director since 2008.

## **FRUZSINA LANYI, COSTUME AND PROP DESIGNER**



Fruzsina is a costume and set designer since graduating from the National Theatre School in 2003, where she has been a costume coach with graduating students since 2016, she has designed over a hundred shows on most Montreal stages, for both underground and corporate productions, as well as InSitu shows. A versatile and audacious creator, she enjoys taking on new challenges, whether as costume designer, prop-maker, make-up artist or artistic director. She also works in her native Hungary, where she was awarded the prize for best set design at the 40th Budapest Film Festival in 2009, was nominated for best costume designs in 2019. Theater remains her preferred domain, however, as much for artistic encounters and exchanges as for the exploration and creation of new worlds.

## LUCIE BAZZO, LIGHTING DESIGNER



Lucie has been a lighting designer for over 30 years. She has collaborated with renowned directors such as Robert Lepage and Denis Marleau, as well as emerging creators. She has also designed lighting for the contemporary dance community, most notably with Linda Gaudreau, Crystal Pite, Benoît Lachambre, Hélène Blackburn, Sylvain Emard, just to name a few. Her work is not limited to the performing arts having collaborated with both musicians (Dear Criminals, Quatuor Bozzini) and several videographers, as well as creating in non-traditional venues. Lucie often conceives lighting installations for the Phénoména Festival and is also a photographer.

## JACKIE GALLANT, SOUND DESIGNER & COMPOSER



Jackie is a musician, video artist and composer who creates and performs for dance, video, theatre and film. She's toured nationally and internationally with La La La Human Steps to Lesbians on Ecstasy. In fall 2015 she composed, directed and performed in the pop-opera *POD~the musical*. In the spring of 2016, she created *The King of Pop*. 2019 saw the release of the concept album *100 Years*, by the duo Home Alone (a collaboration with Yan Basque). In 2022 she toured with Émilie Monnet's *Okinum* and created sound design for the Imago Theatre productions *Foxfinder* and *Upside Down*. She's also been involved as composer and performer in projects with Et tu Machine (*The Cloud*), Technologies of Consciousness (*Numinous Machines*), Ragtag Collective (*Sex Garage*), Fortier Danse-Création (*Trois* and *Solo 70*), Émilie Monnet (*Okinum*) and Helen Simard (*Idiot* and *Requiem Pop*) and has collaborated with video artists Midi Onodera, Nelson Henricks, Matt Soar and filmmaker Sonya Stefan (*The Truss Arch*).

## ELISABETH NYVEEN, STAGE MANAGER



Elisabeth is a multidisciplinary artist of alterity preoccupied with the intersection of performance and play. With a practice that encompasses award-winning audio, technical theatre, performance, production, scenography, and stage management, this person is pleased to join the team presenting this topical work. Nerves wracked and heart rent, we welcome you.

## AVA BISHOP, STAGE MANAGER (WORKSHOP)



Ava is a Montreal-based Stage Manager. She is a graduate of the National Theatre School's Production Design and Technical Arts program. Ava is excited to be working on such an engaging and rich text. Selected Stage Management Credits: *Sapientia* (Scapegoat Carnivale Theatre), *Josephine: A Musical Cabaret* (Segal Centre), *Counter Offence* (Teesri Duniya Theatre), *Wildfire* (Talisman Theatre), *Pool No Water* (Persephone Productions), *Law of the Land* (Caravan Farm Theatre), *Legends of Country* (Stage West Theatre).

## MANY THANKS TO :

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## PREVIOUS TALISMAN THEATRE PRODUCTIONS

Daniel Danis' *That Woman* and Michel Marc Bouchard's *Down Dangerous Passes Road*, both translated by Linda Gaboriau; Marilyn Perreault's *Rock, Paper, Jackknife...* and Sarah Berthiaume's *The Flood Thereafter*, both translated by Nadine Desrochers; Pierre Michel Tremblay's *Coma Unplugged* translated by Micheline Chevrier; Suzie Bastien's *The Medea Effect* translated by Nadine Desrochers; Olivier Kemeid's *The Aeneid* translated by Judith Miller; Fabien Cloutier's *Billy (The Days of Howling)* and *Province* by Mathieu Gosselin in co-production with The Other Theatre both translated by Nadine Desrochers; *Me and You* by Talia Hallmona and Pascal Brullemans translated by Alison Bowie; *Yukonstyle* by Sarah Berthiaume and translated by Nadine Desrochers; *Vic and Flo saw a Bear* by Denis Cote and adapted/translated by Michael MacKenzie; *Clean Slate* by Catherine Chabot et al and translated by Jennie Herbin; *Habibi's Angels* by Hoda Adra and Kalale Dalton-Lutale; *Antioch* by Sarah Berthiaume and translated by Iris Cronin; *Night from the 4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup>* by Rachel Graton and translated by Katherine Turnbull; and *Wildfire* by David Paquet and translated by Leanna Brodie.

**SPECIAL THANKS TO TALISMAN THEATRE'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS :**

Christine Lord, President and interim Secretary; Maria Eliades, Vice President and interim Treasurer; Manuel Ribeira, Director; Paul Chambers, Director; Caroline Ménard, Director; Anne Sabourin, Director; Isabelle Chalifoux, Director; Lyne Paquette, Director.

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