

Danspace Project

Winter 2021

Conversations Without Walls iele paloumpis & Alice Sheppard with Seta Morton

Friday, April 9, 2021

iele paloumpis is a dance artist, herbalist, astrologer and end of life doula living in Canarsie/Munsee territory in Lenapehoking. As one of only a handful of visually impaired choreographers creating contemporary dance in NYC, iele is conducting vital research into effective methods of providing quality audio description for dance – especially as it relates to improvised movement. They have a particular interest in making dances that offer multiple points of access and participation – by enlivening all the senses and allowing ample room for collective consensual choice-making between collaborators and audiences during performance, but also within the rehearsal process itself. All of iele's work is rooted in kinesthetic awareness, trauma-informed griefwork, and ancestral re-membrance practices that reflect fragmented lineages across queer, trans and crip aural histories, alongside their Greek, Anatolian and Irish-American diasporic bloodlines.

iele comes from a long line of mystics, and is grateful to have studied with many teachers who have influenced their path. Under the direction of Donna Faye Burchfield and Jeffery Bullock, iele received a BA in Dance from Hollins University in 2006. As an end of life doula, they have received certifications from Valley Hospice, Mount Sinai's Palliative Care Institute, and Deanna Flores Cochran's Accompanying the Dying program between 2014-16. iele has practiced Tarot since 1995, most recently with the mentorship of Eva Yaa Asantewaa. In summer 2014, iele studied herbology with Rosemary Gladstar, and more recently iele has deepened their connection to ancestral plant medicine across the Mediterranean & SWANA regions with guidance from Layla K. Feghali & SWANA Ancestral. Following in the footsteps of their Anatolian ancestors, iele is mostly a self-taught astrologer, though studying the teachings of Demetra George on Traditional Astrology has been particularly impactful. iele will always be a student of the more-than-human world, and is in endless gratitude to the forests, mountains, rivers, stars and animal-kin who offer so much wisdom.

As a disabled, trans, queer survivor from a working class background, iele empathizes across multiple axes of oppression and brings this awareness to their work as an artist, educator, doula and intuitive healer. www.ielepaloumpis.com

Alice Sheppard, a USA Artist, Creative Capital grantee and Bessie Award winner, Alice trained with Kitty Lunn and Infinity Dance Theater. She then became a core company member with AXIS Dance Company. Alice creates movement that challenges conventional understandings of disabled and dancing bodies. Engaging with disability arts, culture and history, Alice's commissioned work attends to the complex intersections of disability, gender, and race. Alice was a 2018 AXIS Dance Company Choreo-Lab Participant made possible with support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Her choreography has been commissioned by producers from KQED and UCLA as well as physically integrated companies such as CRIPSiE, Full Radius Dance, and MOMENTA Dance Company.

Alice is the founder and artistic lead for Kinetic Light, a project based ensemble, working at the intersections of disability, dance, design, identity, and technology to create transformative art and advance the intersectional disability arts movement.

Her writing has appeared in the New York Times and such journals as Catalyst and Movement Research and Performance Journal.

About Danspace Project

Danspace Project presents new work in dance, supports a diverse range of choreographers in developing their work, encourages experimentation, and connects artists to audiences.

For over 45 years, Danspace Project has supported a vital community of contemporary dance artists in an environment unlike any other in the United States. Located in the historic St. Mark's Church in-the-Bowery, Danspace shares its facility with the Church, The Poetry Project, and New York Theatre Ballet. Danspace Project's Commissioning Initiative has commissioned over 570 new works since its inception in 1994.

Land Acknowledgment

Danspace Project pays respect to Lenape peoples. We acknowledge that this work is situated on the Lenape island of Manhahtaan (Mannahatta) in Lenapehoking, the Lenape homeland. We pay respect to Lenape land, water, and ancestors past, present and future.

Site Acknowledgment

“Before we begin, let’s take a moment to acknowledge that the construction of this building, Saint Mark’s Church-in-the-Bowery, was completed in 1799. That same year, New York State enacted the Gradual Emancipation Act, so it is reasonable to assume that this building where we are when we stand, sit, dance, and some still worship, was built by en-slaved individuals on what was the homeland of the Lenape people.” – Ishmael Houston-Jones (Read more at danspaceproject.org/about)

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