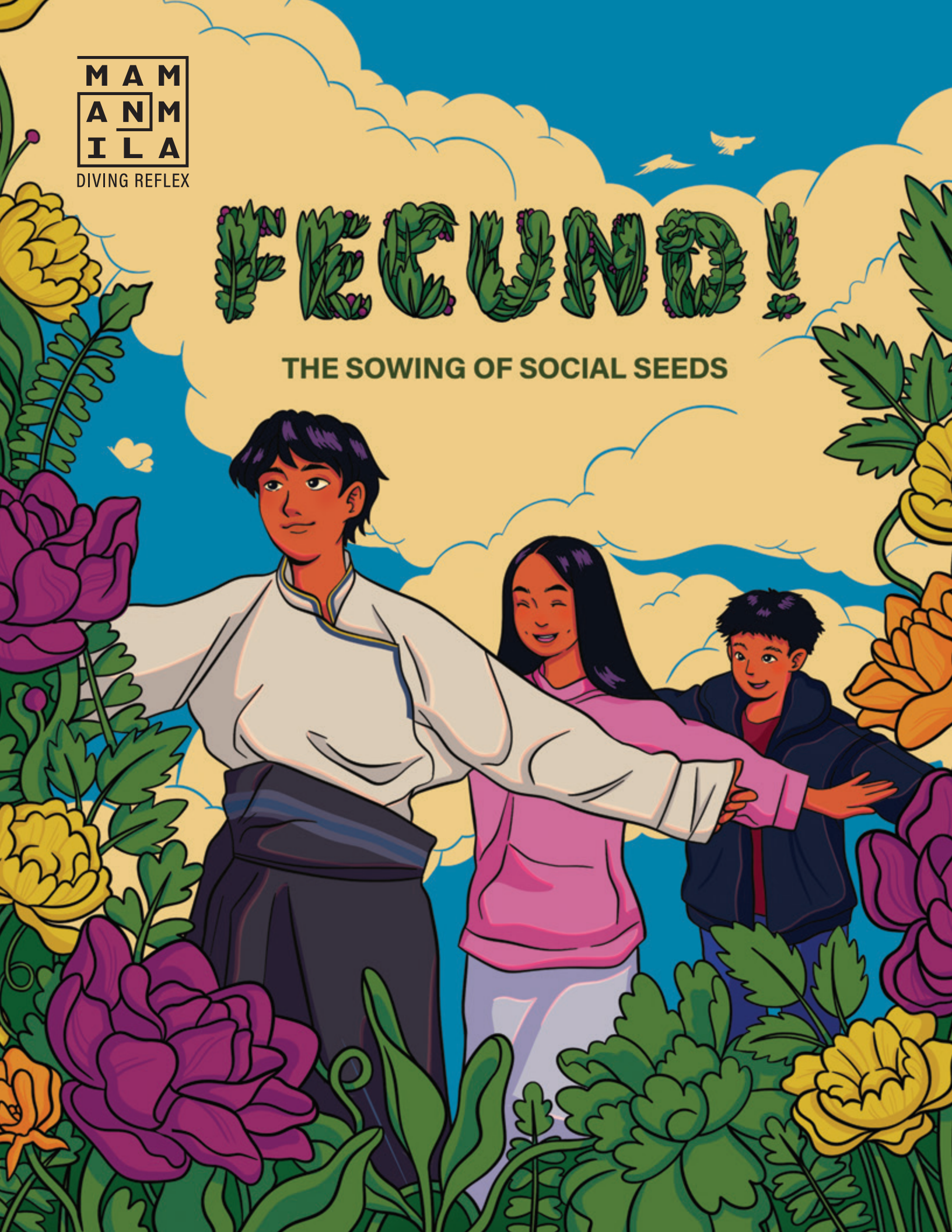


M A M  
A N M  
I L A

DIVING REFLEX

# FEELING

THE SOWING OF SOCIAL SEEDS





IDEAL ENTERTAINMENT  
FOR THE  
END OF THE WORLD

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# MESSAGE FROM THE **ARTISTIC** **DIRECTOR**

**OMFG!** We're absolutely bursting with new growth, heading off in directions we could never have dreamed of in a million cosmological decades, spiraling off at the speed of complexity into a future impossible to predict or even blindly grope a tentative tendril toward.

As we wrapped up the final month of our 30th year of existence (which happened to coincide with the first month of my 60th year of existence—another big O!M!F!G!), we were proliferating faster than we ever have. In that one month alone we germinated in Ansan, Barrie, Berlin, Brussels, Cologne, Lisbon, Milan, Québec City, Riga, Seoul, Toronto, and Townsville! All in ONE MONTH!

In Riga and Québec City, we squeezed out *Mammalian Droppings*, our international emerging artists ensemble extravaganza, which is too complicated and too beautiful to sum up here (see page 14).

In Brussels, we celebrated our 30th with a special project: *Haircuts by Seniors*. We were finally able to morph the salon into the pumping nightclub we had always wanted, whipping up 70s-style haircuts, imported directly from the era when our one male stylist had hair of his own. If you haven't danced to Clothilde's 1967 banger *Fallait pas écraser la queue du chat*, put down this Annual Review and jump into Spotify! What the hell *is* that sound after she says "hep!"...? No clue, but we can't stop grooving to it.

Another big'un was *Enter the Gorshey*, led by Ngawang Luding and beautifully represented on this cover by Toronto illustrator, Tenzin Tsering. We partnered with Nineteen59 and a massive crew of Tibetan youth to invite the public to become honorary Tibetans for the day—sharing meditations, recipes, and the once in a lifetime opportunity to *Enter the Gorshey*.

We also partnered with Glasgow's Wonder Fools and the Mammals of Milan to create *The Book of Spin*.

OMFG, only four works and five cities described and I'm already way over my word count. If you want to know what else we got up to, you'll have to keep unfolding the fronds of *Fecund!* and harvest our story.

See you next year, when I will describe things that even I, as verdant as I am, cannot even begin to imagine.



Darren O'Donnell

# MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



This year, we celebrated our 30th Anniversary; an enduring commitment to socially-engaged art and innovative creation. *Fecund!* has defined Mammalian Diving Reflex's journey.

Our projects have flourished in ways we could not have anticipated. From nine World Premieres to the launch of *Mammalian Droppings*, our work has taken root in new environments and grown in unexpected directions, highlighting our dedication to fostering intergenerational connections, sustainability and collaboration. Our work has reached the opposite corners of the globe and we are proud to have brought our socially-engaged art to diverse audiences across the world.

Returning to our roots, we presented projects in our home, Toronto, including *Enter the Gorshey* and *Everyone is Interesting*. It was a pleasure to attend these shows and witness firsthand the creativity and confidence of our team in delivering such outstanding performances. Seeing the team at work was inspiring and I am always in awe of their commitment to the creation of excellent, touching experiences.

Our collaboration with Wonder Fools and the Mammals of Milan led to the creation of *The Book of Spin*, a project that underscores our innovative approach to distributed creation and our commitment to making art accessible to all.

The unexpected growth we have experienced this year has set the stage for even greater achievements in the future. We are excited to continue exploring new possibilities and pushing the boundaries of our work. Our commitment to fostering socially-engaged art that inspires and transforms remains unwavering and we are eager to see where this journey will take us next.

For those new to Mammalian Diving Reflex, we invite you to join us on this exciting adventure. Our work is driven by a passion for creativity, community engagement and social transformation.

We look forward to seeing you at one of our future performances!



Anthony Tran



# ARTISTIC STATEMENT

Our work is based on three assumptions about the world:

- everyone is interesting
- everyone is generous and kind
- there is abundance

For over three decades, Mammalian Diving Reflex has been a trailblazer, harnessing the creative potential of everyday life. Our replicable, flexible processes have brought together hundreds of thousands of ordinary people, from over 200 locations across the world, in new and unusual ways.

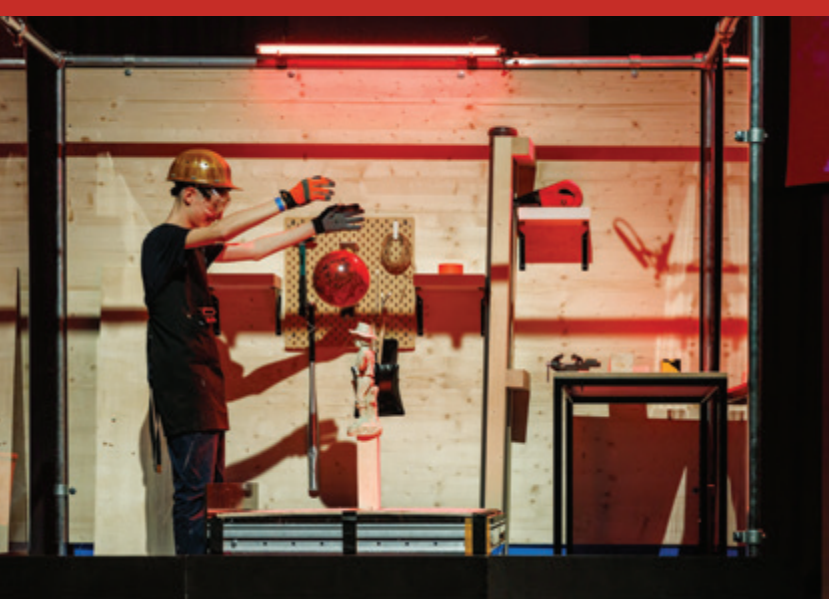
We create moments that obliterate the separation between artists and audience members and between performance and casual reality, providing face-to-face encounters that are desperately needed in this era of intense polarization.

All people are complex, curious, contradictory and compelling creatures. We actively seek contradictions to whip up into aesthetically scintillating performances, trigger understanding, and in turn, develop new ways of being together. We bridge divides and ignite understanding across differences. We make the ordinary beautiful.

We make contemporary performance art for regular ass folks.

Enter the Gorshey Workshop,  
Toronto (2024)  
Photo: Betty Behailu

# 2024



Break it! Make it! Fake it!,  
Berlin (2024)  
Photo: Frank Sperling

- In 2024, we presented **16 performances** experienced by **5,723 people** across **14 cities** in **9 countries**.
- We directly engaged with **342 Collaborators**, **33 Young Mammals**, and **15 Associates & Interns**.
- We were highlighted in **101 media articles**.



Haircuts by Seniors,  
Brussels (2024)  
Photo: Armelle Fouat

- We were featured in the publications **Invite young people to co-create and build the future of museums** by Stefanie Loos and **Performance Across Generations** by Dorte Grannov Balslev.



Nightwalks with Teenagers,  
Ansan (2024)  
Photo: Ansan Cultural Foundation



Nightwalks  
with Teenagers,  
Tokyo (2024)  
Photo: Tianhu Kang



Enter the Gorshey,  
Toronto (2024)  
Photo: Ngawang Datok

- We delivered **18 Artist Talks** across **13 cities** in **9 countries**, highlights include: National Theater of Korea's PAMS, Romania's Sibiu International Performing Arts Market and Live Art Denmark.'



Speed-Dating with Cacti,  
Melbourne (2024)  
Photo: Wayne Taylor

- We offset **102 metric tonnes of carbon** in collaboration with CarbonZero. Also, by our metrics (see page 27 of *30 Years of Regular Ass Folks*), we released approximately **780 less tonnes of carbon** compared to a traditional touring model.

# IMPACT

# FECUND!

## THE SOWING OF SOCIAL SEEDS



### **FECUND! (adjective):**

1. Fruitful in offspring or vegetation
2. Intellectually productive or inventive to a marked degree

In *Emergence: Planning the Unplannable*, our professional development workshop for arts managers and leaders (see page 33), we take a look at the science of dynamic systems to understand the surprising, unexpected direction and growth of Mammalian Diving Reflex by sharing a way of planning for the future that is not strategic but rather, emergent.

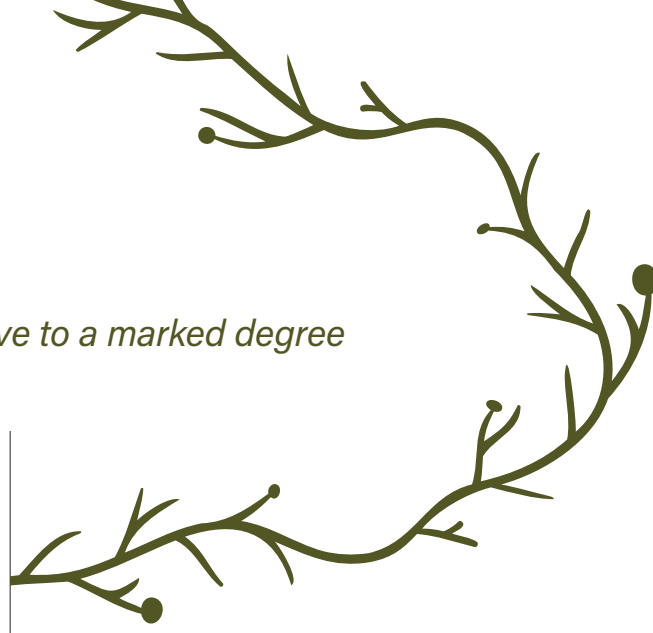
Emergent planning allows for the unpredictable by only paying cursory attention to the most immediate goals, while focusing hard on setting parameters like: values, collaborative principles, topics, populations and people of interest. With these parameters firmly held, we flood the system—in this case: Mammalian itself and our collaborative relationships—with energy and resources, while we keep an eye on what sorts of regular connections and structures start to form.

In the early 2000s, as we shifted from script-based work to the socially-engaged interventionist work we do now, we tried a ton of different things, all under the banner of Social Acupuncture, which yielded the core Mammalian Assumptions which continue to drive the company:

- Everyone is interesting
- Everyone is generous and kind
- There is abundance in the world

It also surprisingly produced *Haircuts by Children*, which sealed a collaborative relationship with the students of Parkdale Public School in Toronto.

Nightwalks with Teenagers,  
Perth (2024)  
Photo: Sophie Minissale



As we invested in these relationships, dumping in a ton of resources and producing a ton of projects, again, something unexpected emerged: The Young Mammals, a group of teens who became our resident ensemble.

Pumping a bunch more energy into those relationships not only yielded a ton of great work, but again, unexpectedly produced The Succession Model of Youth Labour Engagement (SMYLE) and its foundational set of principles:

- Succession: working with youth as if they were to inherit the company
- Collegiality: treating youth as colleagues
- Sharing of social capital: folding youth into our professional networks
- Sharing of habitus, or a feel for the cultural game, with the youth

Out of this popped unexpected relationships with other organizations and youth around the world as we reproduced the model in Germany, the UK and Italy. Most excitingly, it yielded our current core team, the people now running the show, and our massive international network of young collaborators.

We're now on the cusp of what's about to happen next. We are collaborating with a ton of emerging artists, a ton of international presenters, meeting a ton of interesting people, fostering a ton of relationships between everyone, coming up with and testing a shit-ton of new project ideas and keeping an eye on what sort of structures and relationships pop out of the ground.

**What emerges next will be impossible to predict.**





# 2025 ARTISTIC VISION & GOALS

## Cultivate the blossoming of *Mammalian Droppings*, by:

- Continually adding presenter partners to the life-cycle, creating a self-sufficient global network of presenters and emerging artists.
- Beginning to tour and test project proposals in different locales and cultural contexts.
- Expanding and elevating project proposals through rigorous development of artistic content generation.
- Folding strong, thrilling, brain-tingling performance projects into our touring repertoire.
- Legitimizing this new form of artistic creation, offering a how-to-guide to like-minded organizations interested in this progression of the process touring model.

## Reaffirm our deep roots in Toronto, by:

- Forging stronger ties with Toronto's Tibetan community through an expanded return of *Enter the Gorshey*.
- Building connections with Ontario-based presenters and community organizations to commence a new project development with seniors.
- Integrating with our artistic neighbours at 401 Richmond to cross-pollinate on future collaborative opportunities (if you're reading this, hit us up at unit 410!).

## Branch out our new performances, by:

- Advancing our commitment to our long-term youth collaborators in Toronto, Berlin, Bochum, Milan and London via touring opportunities.
- Staging the international premiere of our most ambitious work, *Everything Has Disappeared*, in collaboration with U 'N I Together Productions.
- Conducting the international premieres of our site-specific performances, *Everyone is Interesting* and *Speed-Dating with Cacti*.
- Promoting our repertoire of works at international arts markets, artist talks and symposiums.

## Ripen the sprouts of budding new work, by:

- Collaborating with young people and artists in Canada, South Korea and Australia on the development of *My Thing → Your Thing*.
- Strengthening the creative muscles of our Humboldtling! youth throughout the creation process of *Playgrounds on Fire!*
- Falling more and more in love with Milan, deepening our connections with long-term partners to create even more works together, following the 2024 successes of *The Book of Spin* and *Tenacious Teen Trophies*.

*Everything Has Disappeared*,  
Winnipeg (2024)  
Photo: Joey Sentf

Nightwalks with Teenagers,  
Tokyo (2024),  
Photo: Tianhu Kang

“In a world where youth is revered and growing up is scary and forebode with a tragic prognosis of boring, [*Nightwalks with Teenagers*] brought me comfort (...) it really is a privilege to be invited into their carefree world.”

Jay Darroch, Magazine 6000  
(Perth, Australia)

“Yes, audience participation [but] don't be afraid, the guides are sweet, kind, curious and caring (...) [*Everyone is Interesting*] was a wonderful, eye-opening experience.”

Lynn Slotkin, The Slotkin Letter  
(Barrie, Canada)



One of the biggest challenges in cultivating long-term engagements with youth all around the world is that we simply cannot do it alone.

We need local champions who are willing to adopt and adapt our youth engagement model, as well as open up both their organizations and their lives to local youth for long periods of time. This is a very big ask that gets even bigger when we try to convince presenters to also fold in international youth.

**The solution:** Opportunities for long-term youth engagement are increased when presenters get to know the youth, and discover that they are amazing people. *Mammalian Droppings* juggles it all with our signature elegant complexity.

We are...

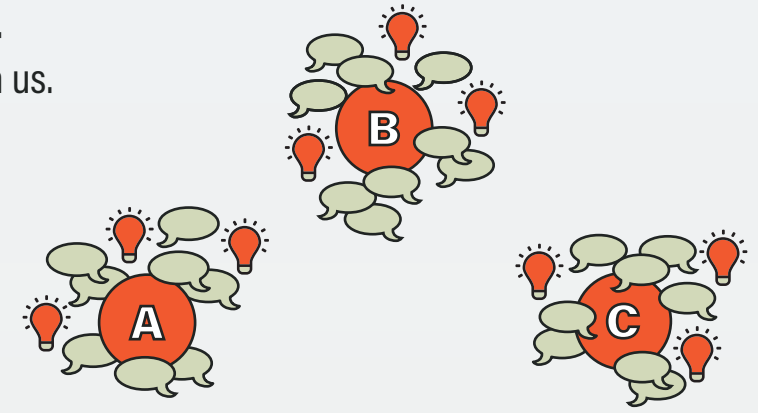
1. Sharing how to do a site-visit.
2. Conceiving a ton of projects.
3. Sharing the skills of process touring.
4. Sharing the skills of international collaboration.
5. Building an international ensemble.
6. Producing a bunch of new work!

# MAMMALIAN DROPPINGS

**Mammalian Droppings** is our international connection-producing machine. It's a little complex, so bear with us.

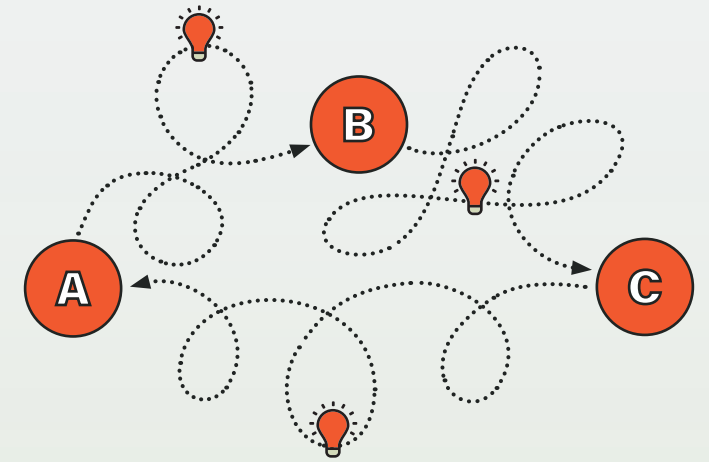
**Phase One**

Each organization gathers a group of artists to create a presentation of *Adrift* (see page 22), which generates dozens of ideas.



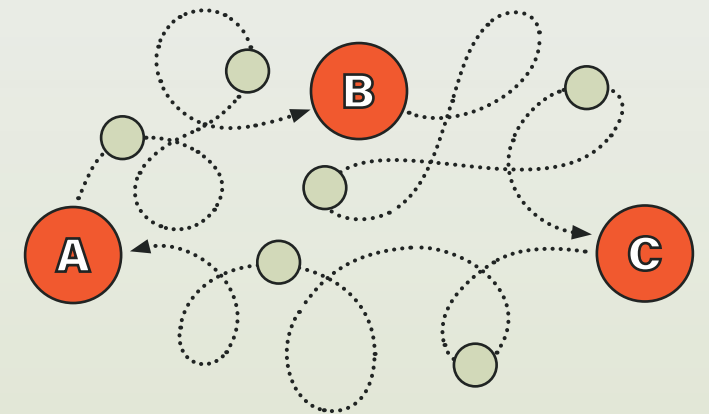
**Phase Two**

The ideas from *Adrift* are presented to another group of artists in a different locale, who have also done Phase One, who then choose a project idea to create.



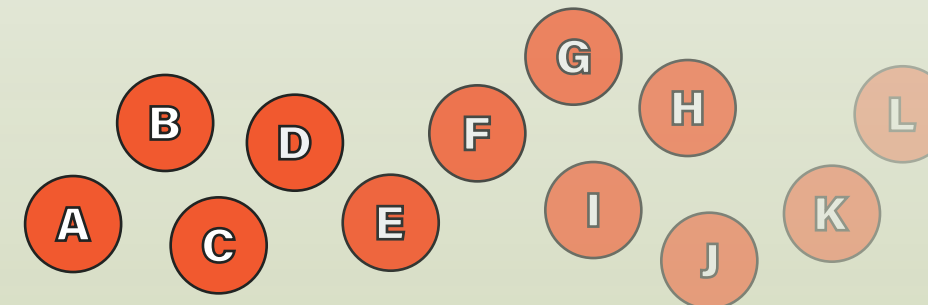
**Phase Three**

Two artists from each locale travel to another locale and work with the local artist group to realize a project originally conceived in their home base.



**Phase Four**

*Mammalian Droppings* will spread to new locations, create new relationships and facilitate new work development on a monumental scale.

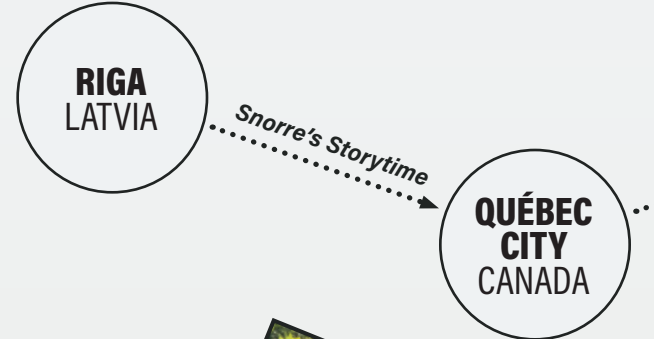


# MAMMALIAN DROPPINGS CASE STUDY: SNORRE'S STORYTIME

In Riga, Latvia hosted by Homo Novus, we brought together a group of local emerging artists for *Adrift on Avotu Street*. One local we met, Snorre K. Svensson, runs the House of Languages. Snorre amazingly reads 200 books at a time; choosing the 17th book in his book shelf, reading one chapter and then moving to the next 17th book. In response to this beautiful insanity, we conceived *Snorre's Storytime*, which was selected by Québec City, Canada presenter, Recto Verso, to be realized by their *Mammalian Droppings* team in early 2025, led in collaboration by two of the Riga emerging artists.

**Mammalian Droppings** is designed to keep on spreading as we continue to add new locations, foster international relationships and develop a metric-ton of new work.

**YOU?**  
Are you a presenter keen to engage in deep, long-term international youth engagement? We'd love to talk to you.



*Adrift on Avotu Street, Riga (2024)*  
Photo: Daina Steinerte



*Adrift, Québec City (2024)*  
Photo: Mammalian Diving Reflex



*Adrift on Avotu Street, Riga (2024)*  
Photo: Andrejs Strokina



*Adrift on Avotu Street, Riga (2024)*  
Photo: Mammalian Diving Reflex

NINE PREMIERES. SIX CITIES. ONE MAMMALIANESSENCE.

# NEW WORK



Everything Has Disappeared, Winnipeg (2024)  
Photo: Joey Senft

## EVERYTHING HAS DISAPPEARED

The seedlings of *Everything Has Disappeared* were first sprinkled back in 2018, with long-time Mammalian collaborator, Hazel Venzon and her company, U 'N I Together Productions. Following research in the Philippines, residencies in Norway and Germany with local Filipino communities, technological tests in Augmented Reality and Generative AI, the honing of our magic skills and the creation of a massive interdimensional machine, six years later, the world premiere blossomed in Winnipeg, Canada.

With the hard work of our creatives, technical team and the beautiful voices of St. Edward the Confessor's Filipino Catholic Church Choir, we were able to share a magically intricate story that considers a world without Filipinos, highlighting the importance of migrant labour through the real stories of Filipino Winnipeggers, all weaved together by the Indigenous Filipino philosophies of *Kapwa* and *Pakikiramdam*—without you, I am nothing.

*Everything Has Disappeared* will proliferate across the world, with an international premiere set for 2025.

**“This magical feat sparked a kind of impact that stunted the audience’s habit to accept easy entertainment. We took important conversations about relationships and shared responsibilities and made people think and feel about it together—a catalyst for social change.”**

Hazel Venzon, Co-Director of *Everything Has Disappeared*, U 'N I Together Productions.



Enter the Gorshey, Toronto (2024)  
Photo: Ngawang Datok

## ENTER THE GORSHEY

**“This initiative is of significant importance to community wellness. It empowers youth to explore their identities and celebrate their cultural roots. The initiatives have been thoughtfully designed with innovative ideas and collaborative spaces, fostering hands-on experiences, learning from Tibetan leaders and encouraging meaningful discussions.”**

Tenzin Wangmo, Co-Devisor of *Enter the Gorshey*, Nineteen59

In Tibetan, “Gorshey” translates to “dance circle,” a centuries old tradition where people in vibrant costumes form concentric circles and dance together for many hours. It’s beautiful to watch—and even more beautiful to take part in. It is quite daunting for an outsider to dive into such a thing. This cultural dichotomy was fertile ground for our socially-engaged practice.

Ngawang (our resident Tibetan), along with local Tibetan youth and community partners designed a journey to guide non-Tibetan audiences through Tibetan culture, providing the cultural knowledge, specificity and welcoming spirit to become an honorary Tibetan for the day. Going through various stations, each led by the youth, audiences learned the history of Tibet, how to make delicious momos, the meaning behind traditional clothing, experience a guided meditation, and of course, a crash-course in Gorshey.

Once all stations are complete—and only then—the audiences received their Khata of honour and an exclusive invite to *Enter the Gorshey*, joining the ongoing communal dance with confidence and cultural understanding.



Everyone is Interesting, Toronto (2024)  
Photo: Mammalian Diving Reflex

## EVERYONE IS INTERESTING

New work can sprout out of the most bizarre circumstances. With City of Toronto’s Doors Open, we were tasked with creating a bespoke guided tour. We planned to bring *Home Tours*, where we knock on strangers’ doors with an audience and ask for a tour of the strangers’ homes, to the highly sought after neighbourhood on Toronto Islands. That was until a tiny contingent of the neighbourhood’s mega-NIMBYs got word of it and we had to pivot. Fast.

How could we present a guided tour of Toronto Islands, with no physical landmarks? We’ll host a *guided tour of the Island visitors*, of course! Thus, *Everyone is Interesting* was born.

Tour groups embark on a series of intimate, unusual and joyful experiences with random members of the public to prove that all people are complex, curious, contradictory and compelling creatures. *Everyone is Interesting* operates with a deep awareness of the effects of connecting with others and the understanding that, in the right context, people will take care of even the most random stranger.

**“I can’t think of a company that’s better than Mammalian at nudging folks outside their comfort zone and waking them up to the everyday magic of the people and community around them. I left the experience feeling more connected, curious, and more likely to strike up a conversation with a stranger in future.”**

Nathaniel Hanula-James, Curator (I Do, I Don’t, I Dare!)



Adrift on Avotu Street, Riga (2024)  
Photo: Andrejs Strokins



Nightwalks with Teenagers, Perth (2024)  
Photo: Sophie Minissale

## ADRIFT

**“The process was full of surprises. It’s given me a strong urge to strike up conversations with strangers and I encourage my students to do the same.”**

Marika Černavska, *Adrift* participant, teacher, director and community art practitioner

*Adrift* takes root from seeds we planted a decade ago when we created *Adrift in Gloucester*, commissioned by the UK’s JOLT International Theatre Festival. The Young Mammals and a group of local teens took to the streets with the goal of entering the lives of the people of Gloucester in meaningful ways. We helped a teen complete her homework, assisted seniors crossing the road, built a makeshift pergola for a local tandoori restaurant (at least attempted to) and documented the whole process.

Now, *Adrift* celebrates the spirit of these early interventions and builds upon our first Mammalian Assumption, which you should definitely know by now... everyone is interesting!

Mammalians with local emerging artists wander the streets, uncovering the unique experiences, skills and hobbies of the people that live, work, walk and roll in a specific part of town. Based on these encounters, we come up with socially-engaged participatory project ideas inspired by each and every person we meet. We then pitch these ideas to an audience to see if any of these ideas may bear fruit.

## THE BOOK OF SPIN

All the world’s a messaging app.

2024’s most exciting missive was from Jack Nurse of Glasgow’s Wonder Fools, who invited us to contribute to *Positive Stories for Negative Times*, a resource series for theatre kids looking for something a bit more exciting than reciting Shakespearean prose!

The result: an obsession with coming up with a (kinda) new instructional performance form designed to use a messaging app—like WhatsApp—as a stage. We call this form Spin. *The Book of Spin* is a how-to guide for creating your own Spins, with examples and a starter kit for seeding your own little Mammalian Diving Reflex.

Best of all, we created it with the Mammals of Milan—Alba Qerimaj, Andrada Ciccotto, Chiara Prodi, Sara Ben Hamouda and Stefano Perlotta—joining Darren over WhatsApp to sort out exactly how this new form operates.

Download your own *The Book of Spin* on our website; if you spin Spins, please send them our way and we’re happy to add them to the book.

**“I tried to do something dynamic that allows people to get closer and maybe become friends. I think that being able to share personal and life experiences so quickly allows people to discover something new about others, even if they didn’t think they wanted to know these things.”**

Stefano Perotta, Co-Creator of *The Book of Spin* and Mammal of Milan



Break it! Make it! Fake it!, Berlin (2024)  
Photo: Frank Sperling

## BREAK IT! MAKE IT! FAKE IT!

**“I loved that we made our own creative choices. We chose how we break the object and how we make the new object. Every young person likes to break something, with all of their power. This was my favourite project.”**

Kaan Denli, *Break it! Make it! Fake it!*  
Participant and Humboldtling! youth

*Break it! Make it! Fake it!* emerged from our five-year Humboldtling! adventure with students from the Thomas Mann Gymnasium in Berlin, Germany. Inside the halls of the Humboldt Forum, objects are carefully preserved and protected, but who or what really determines their value?

This multimedia live video performance was a collaboration with Aussie artists Rhian and Ivy Hinkley. Young people were handed the tools to break, smash, glue and reconstruct objects—transforming them into something entirely new. After the creative chaos, the re-imagined pieces were given a fictional backstory and auctioned off to the highest bidder, highlighting that many objects are only as valuable as the story you tell about them, with the big question: who gets to tell that story...?



Pigeons, Strawberries, Dilemmas, Berlin (2024)  
Photo: Frank Sperling

## PIGEONS, STRAWBERRIES, DILEMMAS

*Pigeons, Strawberries, Dilemmas* was a collaboration between the Taiwan-based collective, Prototype Paradise and our curious Humboldtling! teens. The students delved into the behind-the-scenes stories of employees keeping the Humboldt Forum welcoming, accessible and safe. With the audience guided by the youth, the conversations revealed the funny, intimate and quirky moments staff have experienced while working.

*Pigeons, Strawberries, Dilemmas* was a unique audio tour packed with small dramas and playful insights, including musings on controlling the pigeon population, how it *feels* to eat strawberry cake and shared memories of where the Palace of the Republic and the Berlin Palace once stood.

**“Everyone has something exciting to tell if you really listen to them. When I met Mischa, the caretaker of the Humboldt Forum, I was surprised at how much creativity is involved in the job. I thought it was really funny how he solved the pigeon problem in the underground car park with cardboard boxes and juice bottles.”**

Elli Kuehne,  
*Pigeons, Strawberries, Dilemmas*  
Participant and Humboldtling! youth



## SPECIAL 30TH ANNIVERSARY PERFORMANCES



Tenacious Teen Trophies, Milan (2024)  
Photo: Raffaele Riccardelli

### TENACIOUS TEEN TROPHIES

**“Having done *The Children’s Choice Awards*, I’d usually see the Jury doing cartwheels or playing tag while waiting for the doors to open. *Tenacious Teen Trophies* felt like going to a show with younger friends. After the shows we would gather around a homemade vegan meal and have deep conversations, with some tears shed.”**

Jana Eiting, Director of *Tenacious Teen Trophies*

Have we mentioned how much we love Linda di Pietro? Linda is one of our incredible Italian champions, having programmed *Teentalitarianism* in Terni and *Nightwalks with Teenagers* in Bologna & Modena. Now at BASE in Milan, Linda reached out with a desire for us to propagate BASE’s efforts in youth community outreach with a new, special project as part of their FAROUT Live Arts Festival.

Drawing inspiration from *The Children’s Choice Awards*, *Tenacious Teen Trophies* burst forth as an intervention into the structure and institution of BASE’s festival. Milanese teenagers were appointed the official Festival Jury, culminating in an awards ceremony where they presented hand-made trophies to the winners, all decided by them, and described in their own words.

The performance reshapes the social contract between young people, adult audiences and arts & cultural institutions. Critical viewpoints of teenagers are often relegated to the background, dismissed by adult artists, creative organizations, curators and media. *Tenacious Teen Trophies* gives teenagers the power to make executive decisions and actively take part in the arts and cultural landscape, providing weight and legitimacy to their essential viewpoints.



Haircuts by Seniors, Brussels (2024)  
Photo: Armelle Fouat

### HAIRCUTS BY SENIORS

Inspired by “Haircuts by Octogenarians,” a playing card of an imagined Mammalian performance in Patrick Blenkarn and Milton Lim’s game *Culture Capital*, *Haircuts by Seniors* bloomed into an actual, real-life performance.

*Haircuts by Seniors* swept away the tired, false belief that older folks can’t keep up. A spin on *Haircuts by Children*, *Haircuts by Seniors* was a 1970s-themed technicolour celebration of brilliance, inviting audiences to let go of their vanity and place their trust in the dexterity of seniors. In collaboration with Art+People in Brussels, Belgium, local seniors occupied two salons in the Marolles neighbourhood, transforming the street into a *Saturday Night Fever* dreamscape of bold patterns, disco lights, stacked vintage magazines and *hair rollers for dayyyyyys*.

At its core, *Haircuts by Seniors* is a social exercise that addresses the isolation felt by our oldest and most vulnerable populations, offering an unconventional opportunity for intimate connections between unlikely strangers—and a fabulous haircut too—after all, they’ve been around long enough to know a thing or two about style.

**“Having taken part in back-to-back tours of *Haircuts by Children* in Horsens and *Haircuts by Seniors* in Brussels, the seniors brought as much enthusiasm for the accessories and glitter hairspray as the children did! It was heartwarming to see how much trust and openness audiences came in with for a not-so-typical opportunity to connect with a different generation than them.”**

Marie Lola Minimo,  
Co-Director of *Haircuts by Seniors*



Haircuts by Children,  
Detmold (2024)  
Photo: Dirk Schelpmeier

**“Children are capable of much more than we adults sometimes think. [Haircuts by Children is] a huge democratic exercise.”**

Mette Graugaard, Horsens Folkeblad  
(Horsens, Denmark)

**“[Haircuts by Children] is wonderfully liberating (...) with an element of risk, and with a less predictable social encounter, we can be jolted out of our habits. Both children and adults can gain some new perspectives, on each other and on our society.”**

Henriette Stensen, Periskop  
(Horsens, Denmark)

# OUR TOURS IN 2024

## EVERYTHING HAS DISAPPEARED

Winnipeg, Canada (February 1–4)

PRESENTED BY  
Prairie Theatre Exchange

*World Premiere*

## NIGHTWALKS WITH TEENAGERS

Perth, Australia (February 21–25)

PRESENTED BY  
Encounter Theatre & Perth Festival

## BREAK IT! MAKE IT! FAKE IT!

Berlin, Germany (February 23–24)

PRESENTED BY  
Humboldt Forum

*World Premiere*

## NIGHTWALKS WITH TEENAGERS

Ansan, South Korea (May 4–6)

PRESENTED BY  
Ansan Street Arts Festival

*South Korean Premiere*

## HAIRCUTS BY CHILDREN

Detmold, Germany (May 18–19)

PRESENTED BY  
BILDSTÖRUNG

## EVERYONE IS INTERESTING

Toronto, Canada (May 25–26)

PRESENTED BY  
Doors Open Toronto

*World Premiere*

## PIGEONS, STRAWBERRIES, DILEMMAS

Berlin, Germany (June 28–29)

PRESENTED BY  
Humboldt Forum

*World Premiere*

## ENTER THE GORSHEY

Toronto, Canada (July 27)

PRESENTED BY  
Arts in the Parks

*World Premiere*

## THE BOOK OF SPIN

(August 19)

PRESENTED BY  
Wonder Fools

*World Premiere*

## ADRIFT ON AVOTU STREET

Riga, Latvia (September 6)

PRESENTED BY  
Homo Novus

*World Premiere*

*As part of Mammalian Droppings*

## EVERYONE IS INTERESTING: THE COMMITTED EDITION

Barrie, Canada (September 21–22)

PRESENTED BY  
Talk is Free Theatre's  
I Do, I Don't, I Dare!

## HAIRCUTS BY CHILDREN

Horsens, Denmark (September 21–22)

PRESENTED BY  
Horsens Teaterfestival

## HAIRCUTS BY SENIORS

Brussels, Belgium (October 4–5)

PRESENTED BY  
Art+People

*World Premiere*

## ADRIFT

Québec City, Canada (October 5)

PRESENTED BY

Productions Recto-Verso

*As part of Mammalian Droppings*

## NIGHTWALKS WITH TEENAGERS

Townsville, Australia (October 10–12)

PRESENTED BY  
North Australian Festival of Arts

## TENACIOUS TEEN TROPHIES

Milan, Italy (October 12)

PRESENTED BY  
BASE's FAROUT Live Arts Festival

*World Premiere*

## NIGHTWALKS WITH TEENAGERS

Tokyo, Japan (November 14–16)

PRESENTED BY  
Yurakucho Art Urbanism

*Japanese Premiere*

# WORKSHOPS

Creating a performance from scratch is time and labour intensive, which is why we also offer workshops directly to arts organizations and individual artists. These workshops exist to supply the intellectual tools that will spread our practice and ethos to as many artistically-inclined people as possible. We have workshops for any budget, length of engagement and site-specific location.



## COMPELLING TELLING

*Compelling Telling* is a masterclass designed for socially-engaged artists, community leaders, urban planners, social workers, educators, activists and individuals interested in using art to strengthen community ties. What began as a term-long teaching unit at Nelson-Mandela-Schule in Bochum, Germany has blossomed into an internationally delivered series, having taken place in Tunisia, the UK, Taiwan, China, Italy, Australia and Canada.

This hands-on workshop blends theoretical insights from complexity science with playful examples and real-world exercises. Moving with the Mammalian Assumption that everyone is generous and kind, participants test and nurture social relationships through artistic interventions, culminating in a small performance created in collaboration with local shop-owners.

**Compelling Telling, Modena (2021)**  
Photo: Enrico Moretti



## THE HUMAN COLLIDER

*The Human Collider* is a simple yet powerful format. The concept is straightforward: bring together two very different populations and, together, do something unusual. Then, participants share the story of their collaboration on stage. We've used this format to produce bespoke experiences and performances, such as *Adrift in Gloucester* (2015), where high school drama students and hip-hop club members spent a week together offering help to anyone in the city who needed it. This formula has been central to works like *Millionen! Millionen! Millionen!* (2015), *The Hemsbach Protocol* (2016) and *LOL100: The Life of Leaders in 100 Objects* (2022).

**Pigeons, Strawberries, Dilemmas, Berlin (2024)**  
Photo: Frank Sperling



## THE CITY STREETS ARE MADE FOR FAST FEET

**Nightwalks with Teenagers, Tokyo (2024)**  
Photo: Tianhu Kang

*The City Streets Are Made for Fast Feet* provides teenagers with a crash-course in socially-engaged practice through a series of Social High Intensity Interval Training (SHIIT) exercises. After the groundwork is set, participants are split into teams and sent into the heart of the city. They have one mission: create a transcendent moment of overwhelming beauty. Much like how muscle exhaustion builds strength, or confusion leads to clarity, making transcendent social moments requires a little bit of awkwardness - and a lot of heart. A building-block of *Nightwalks with Teenagers*, *The City Streets Are Made for Fast Feet* is a fast demonstration of the Mammalian Assumptions: everyone is generous, kind and interesting.

## EMERGENCE: PLANNING THE UNPLANNABLE

*Emergence: Planning the Unplannable* offers an engaging introduction to the science of complexity and its relevance with managing teams, leading organizations and navigating the complexities of one's career and personal life. Part motivational talk, part interactive workshop, Darren shares techniques for understanding complexity, change and making space for the unexpected to emerge. Designed for those ready to challenge old hierarchies, shake up routines, and cultivate diversity in ideas, perspectives and people, this workshop inspires meaningful transformation. Combining active participation with practical insights, *Emergence: Planning the Unplannable* is a "brains-on, feet-on" experience. Be prepared to move.



**Artist Talk, Tokyo (2024)**  
Photo: Matthew Mizuochi

Break it! Make it! Fake it!, Berlin (2024)  
Photo: Frank Sperling



Nightwalks with Teenagers,  
Perth (2024)  
Photo: Sophie Minissale



Speed-Dating with Cacti,  
Melbourne (2024)  
Photo: Wayne Taylor



# WORKS IN DEVELOPMENT

## MY THING → YOUR THING

Aiming for a 2025 premiere, *My Thing → Your Thing* draws inspiration from our Humboldtling! performance *Make It! Break it! Fake it!*, the spectacle of a live auction and spontaneous object creation.

The project is part of our long-term engagement with our emerging Young Mammals cohort in Ansan, South Korea: The Kids from Korea, and is being created with Australian artists Rhian and Ivy Hinkley, The Kids from Korea and a cohort of young people from Melbourne, Australia.

At first, we were searching for meaningful objects that community members were willing to give away; however, we quickly learned that separating people from their objects inherently diminishes the object's sentimental value. Our focus shifted to the community members themselves, with the goal of discovering the hobbies and skills that define their identities.

This process currently culminates in a unique marketplace where the young people and audiences collaborate to create objects, showcasing the skills that define them, while earning currency to take part in a competitive auction to bid for those very objects.

## PLAYGROUNDS ON FIRE!

*Playground's on Fire!* will be an interactive experience in which a mixed hearing-and-deaf\* audience must work together to douse the (not real) fires of a playground that just won't stop burning. To put the fire out, audiences have to come together to solve a series of puzzles, the clues for which are shared by a team of young people. The team can point, use sign language, emojis, and other creative methods to convey clues. There's just one rule: *No spoken language!*

This participatory performance is being developed by an intergenerational deaf/hearing inclusive team in Berlin, Germany.

\*Deaf is a positive self-designation of non-hearing people, regardless of whether they are deaf, profoundly deaf or hard of hearing.

## SPEED-DATING WITH CACTI

*Speed-Dating with Cacti*, while technically not a Mammalian project, is a production by Darren O'Donnell and Alice Fleming in collaboration with the Royal Botanic Gardens Victoria in Melbourne, Australia. Following the upcoming 2025 premiere, this performance will be tossed into Mammalian's touring repertoire.

Featuring Mahasi-style walking meditators, a dharma teacher, a botanist, a cognitive neuroscientist, an entomologist, a stand-up comedian, an 88-year-old woman with Alzheimers and a bunch of children chasing an ice-cream truck, *Speed-Dating with Cacti* asks the impossible to answer question: which species has the purest access to this present moment *riiiiiight....NOW?*

In development since 2019, *Speed-Dating with Cacti* invites the audience on a meditative garden stroll through *bambusa vulgaris*, past *Dicksonia antarctica*, *Asplenium australasicum* and the very threatening *De Laubenfels' araucaria*, forcing audiences to come face-to-face with our own species' inevitable mortality and (among a few other of our succulent earthly cohabitants): *Echinopsis pachanoi*, a formidable cactus with a lot on his mind.

Coming soon to a patch of vegetation near you.

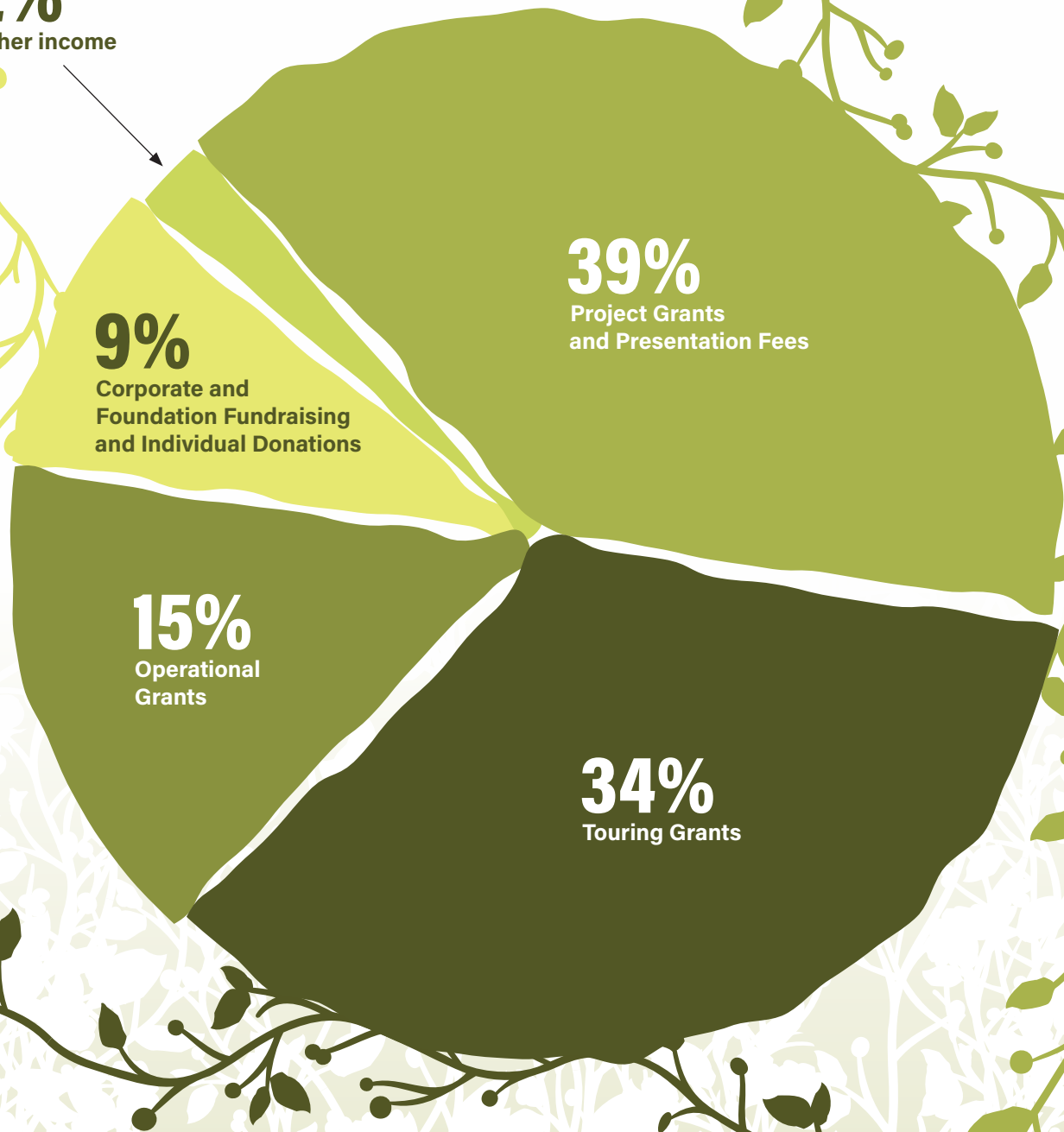
**"It is a unique piece of art; truly one of a kind!  
The content is a beautiful blend of theory, practice and science of meditation. I love how the audience is a part of the art and I am excited about the project's ideas coming to fruition."**

—Vismay Agrawal, Cognitive Neuroscience PhD Candidate at Monash University's Centre for Consciousness and Contemplative Studies

# 2024 FINANCIAL REPORT

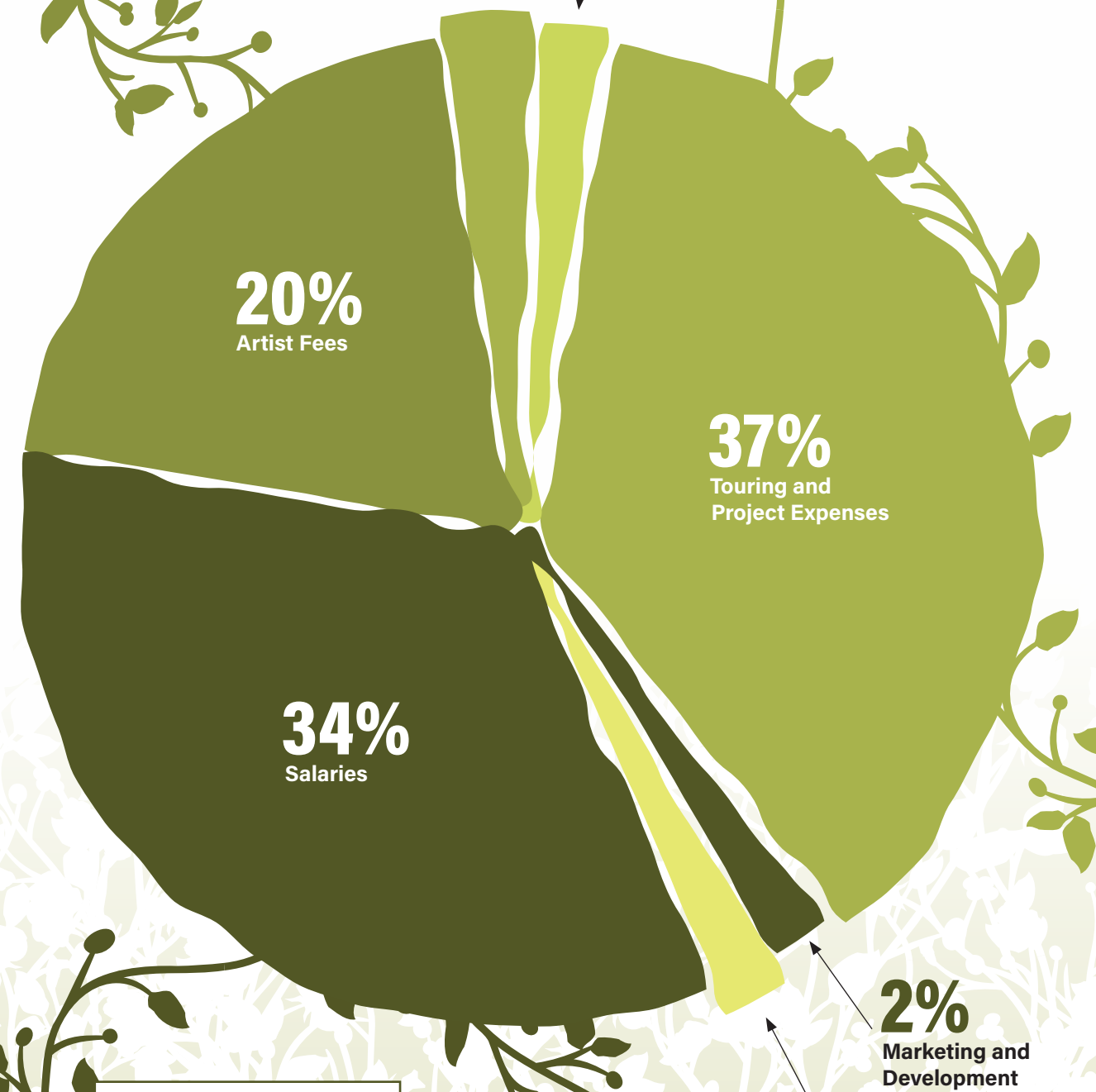
TOTAL REVENUE

2%  
Other income



3%  
General  
Operational Costs

2%  
Rent



TOTAL EXPENSES

2%  
Marketing and  
Development

2%  
Other  
Expenses



# FINANCIAL VISION & GOALS

Following our prolific 30th Anniversary celebration; plus the emergence of new streams of generous support from corporate and private funders, we are thrilled to acknowledge that we have made meaningful strides in achieving our long-term Financial Vision and Goals. These are:

- Invest in long-term artistic mentoring to continue to diversify the authors of our concepts and work.
- Develop meaningful corporate and private fundraising connections with like-minded organizations, to eventually make up 10% of total revenue.
- Source diversified revenue streams through the creation of new work and co-productions to join our existing works in repertoire.

A core contributor to achieving these goals is *Mammalian Droppings*. Through this global, multi-year project, we have been able to plant the seeds of new creations, friendships and networks. This ambitious project is supported by the Canada Council for the Arts' Strategic Innovation Fund: Cultivate stream, and its impact on the wider performing arts industry in Canada and beyond will be long-lasting.

Across Toronto, our collaborations with communities and commitment to training both emerging artists and the next generation of artistic leadership via our Young Mammals initiative has attracted support from a growing network of corporate and private funding entities. Moving forward, we hope to expand on our offerings to provide additional pathways that will upskill emerging and youth artists in meaningful ways.

We, like almost every arts organization in this tumultuous post-pandemic financial landscape, are keenly focused on continuing to diversify our revenue streams to ensure a healthy, robust balance sheet. As we enter 2025, we are eager to harvest some of the new projects sowed during the phases of *Mammalian Droppings* and add them to our basket of touring projects, progressing the steady growth of our company in these uncertain financial times.

Nightwalks with Teenagers,  
Tokyo (2024)  
Photo: Tianhu Kang



# OUR FUTURE

**Seedlings, without the right care,  
stay as seedlings,  
never growing into the beautiful organism  
they're intended to be.  
Similarly, artistic visions  
need the right people and resources  
to grow and flourish,  
otherwise they remain as just ideas  
on a whiteboard.**

We're interested in creating performances and projects that showcase great art while also embracing the social responsibility of the arts.

Thanks to our donors, we've turned ideas into meaningful realities. From celebrating Tibetan culture with *Enter the Gorshey*, to building global connections with *Mammalian Droppings*, every project has been rooted in our commitment to socially-engaged art.

Supporting young people and artists is central to our mission and none of this would be possible without the generosity of our corporate sponsors, foundations, government partners and individual donors, the incredible Mammal Lovers.

Dollar bills might not grow on trees, but change can; so, let's plant those seeds of creation and nurture them together. If our work resonates with you, please consider supporting our company.

**Together we can grow  
not just one plant,  
but a thriving forest.**

Speed-Dating with Cacti,  
Melbourne (2024)  
Photo: Wayne Taylor





Everything Has Disappeared,  
Winnipeg (2024)  
Photo: Joey Senft

**“A mesmerizing kaleidoscope of performance that blends hard data, soft magic, virtual reality, mentalism and Filipino Indigenous knowledge, to astonishing effect.”**

Rod Cantiveros, Filipino Journal  
(Winnipeg, Canada)

**“Everything Has Disappeared puts faces to concerns that are often neglected, telling human stories that usually go unseen and unheard. When Venzon asks you to close your eyes, you listen. And when you open them, you learn.”**

Ben Waldman, Winnipeg Free Press  
(Winnipeg, Canada)

**“A mesmerizingly “tour de force play” aided by electronic wizardry and an electrifying performance of Hazel Venzon.”**

Rod Cantiveros, Filipino Journal  
(Winnipeg, Canada)

# THE MAMMALIANS

## OUR STAFF

**Darren O'Donnell**  
Artistic Director

**Ryan Lewis**  
Senior Producer &  
Communications Manager

**Virginia Antonipillai**  
Operations Manager &  
Creative Producer

**Isabel Ahat**  
Associate Producer &  
Assistant Finance Manager

**Marie Lola Minimo**  
Communications &  
Production Coordinator

**Ngawang Luding**  
Development Officer &  
Associate Artist

**Joseph Rufin**  
Finance Manager

**Alice Fleming**  
Strategic Advisor

**Kathy Vuu**  
Associate Artist

**Wendell Williams**  
Associate Artist

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Aljen Aguilar  
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Anamari Goicoechea  
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Andrejs Strokins  
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Ava Campbell  
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Baek Yeeun  
Beatrix Bayes-Kennedy  
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Philip Dyke  
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Tenzin Chozin  
Troy O'Donnell  
Vyantha Anupa Perera  
Your Friends With Benefits Inc.  
Anonymous (x4)

## BECOME A MAMMAL LOVER

If you would like to support what we do, which will directly aid the creation of new works and opportunities for emerging artists, you can donate securely online at [mammalian.ca/support-us](https://mammalian.ca/support-us), via the QR code, or send a cheque to our address on the back of this review:



Every project, performance and connection we create is made possible through generous support. To our Board of Directors, Government Supporters, Foundations and Mammal Lovers, thank you for believing in us and for helping us bring our vision to life. Your commitment means the world.

Canada



An agency of the Government of Ontario  
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



Canadian Race Relations Foundation



METCALF FOUNDATION

With generous support from the Kingfisher Foundation.

# THANK YOU

Nightwalks with Teenagers,  
Townsville (2024)  
Photo: Linda Bone





DIVING REFLEX

# CONTACT US

We thrive on connection and collaboration. If you're ready to join the creative chaos, drop us a line and let's make something happen!

Head to [mammalian.ca](http://mammalian.ca) to sign up to our quarterly e-Newsletter.

Email us at [hello@mammalian.ca](mailto:hello@mammalian.ca)

Email's our jam—but if you're feeling old school, you can always try us at +1 (647) 224 3843

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