



POUNDS PER SQUARE INCH PERFORMANCE

2022/2023 ARTISTIC
DIRECTOR'S SEASON REPORT

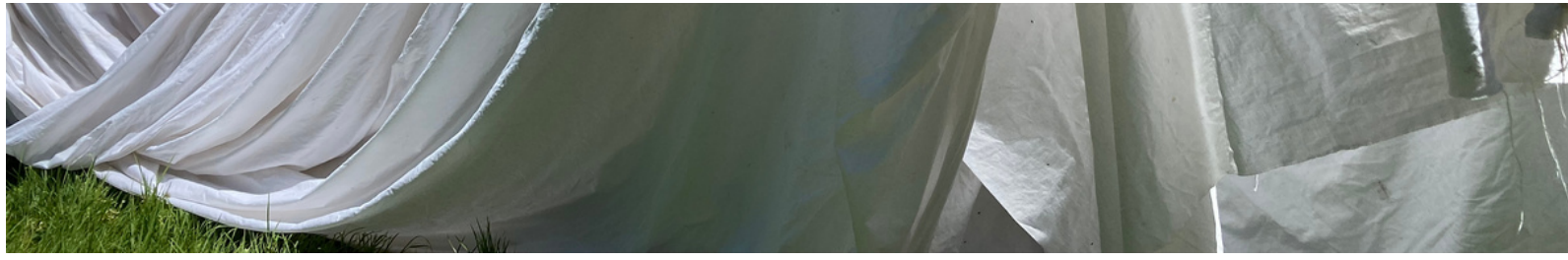


Photo by Gerry Trentham

WHERE WE ARE NOW

I'm not sure how to begin to talk about this past season. While I look back on this attempt to find, not only a new but essential, vision for our next seasons as we build towards our 30th anniversary in 2025/2026, the word that comes to mind is "resilience". A word, like so many, that has become less powerful with overuse, watered down from a rainstorm of mistaken or casual use, where the word becomes disembodied from actual experience. I am using it here as we continue to survive the resonating pandemic and although we grew our work during these last years, there has been a different kind of cost than we have experienced in the past. These costs have been deep and I must honour them as I look forward to what is to come.

We rise and fall with nature, cyclical and layered. The sun has been rising for us over the last number of years, with a quick adaptation to film and online workshops. The real test, however, has been in our return to the balance of live and online work. Body sourced art is uniquely challenging, as it cannot fulfill its power without live in-person exchange. As we return, the landscape has been decimated with lost spaces and support systems.

Many artists have survived by moving out of Toronto and the local focus that concentration inspires and breeds is now more difficult to come by.

For us at Pounds, the cost has also been more personal. Our General Manager (GM), **Adina Herling** has decided to step down. The pandemic asked her to reschedule, reproduce many projects over and over again, and adapt quickly to find new funds when all our education and income from live box office fell away.

I suspect all artistic directors name eras of their company after the team that gathered to collaborate. In a small art organization, the core relationship is an intertwined AD and GM. This era of Pounds has been gifted with the presence of Adina Herling, who was actually for a short time the young administrator who began the incorporation of the company with me a few decades ago and then returned to become GM over the last number of years. This included these few years through the pandemic that Pounds would not have survived without her dedication.

For a number of reasons, including the emotional and physical costs of us working with little pause through the pandemic to ensure the company's survival, she decided to transition. We will deeply miss Adina and thank her endlessly for her work with Pounds.

A YEAR OF GRACEFUL RESILIENCE

The transforming administration was only a part of a larger loss. When I use the word resilience, I am speaking of a new kind of care that calls for pause, time, and recovery as we lost a number of our long-time artistic collaborators.

First, in September, one of my dear friends and collaborators of over two and a half decades passed away. **Lorraine Parow** was a force, a brilliant photographer from an era before the instant photo. We met at the height of our early careers, her success travelling the world photographing portraits and landscapes and mine travelling with Serge Bennathan's company of Dancemakers.

We talked often about how we transformed after such heights to find our new callings. She photographed my first major work, **Cathedral** (1998) and created the image for our press. She last worked on *Trees* by offering her spectacular images projected into the space. And finally, we very nearly completed a book *Gesture 2* of her photographs and my poetry – you can order the pre-edited version on Amazon. Lorraine, without originally telling me about her cancer, offered this generous gesture and spent hours designing and compiling the photographs and poems before she passed.

Photos by Lorraine Parow & Gerry Trentham

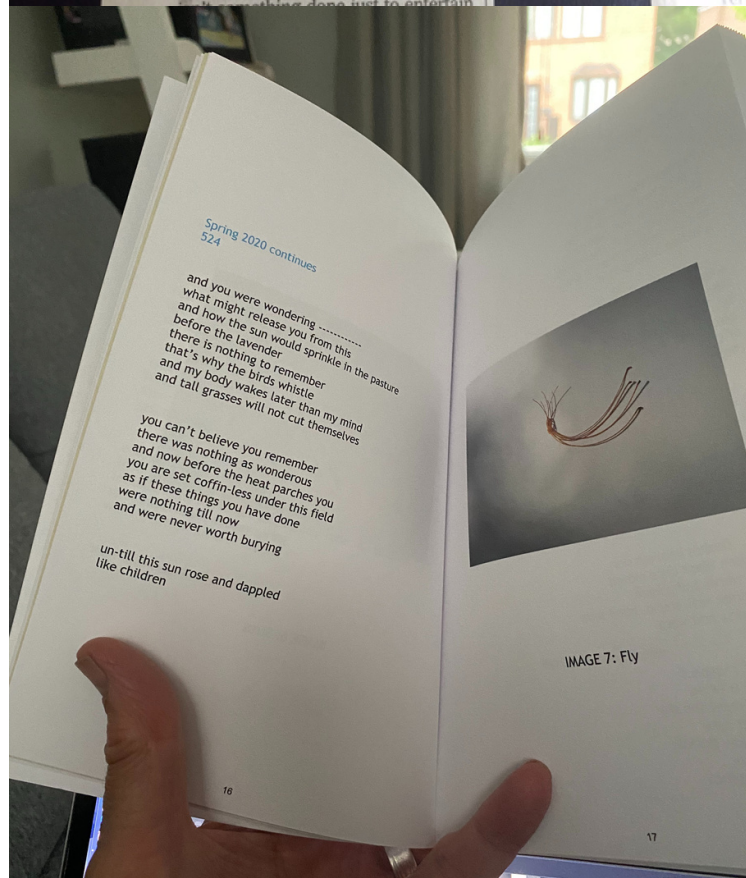




Photo by Gerry Trentham

A few years back, Sylvie Bouchard's Bouchardanse commissioned a duet by a choreographer that we both wanted to work with. **Tedd Robinson** almost completed the work before he passed. With the support of his legacy team, Sylvie and I completed and performed **Bob's Last Request** (an ironic title) at the Citadel in Toronto in May 2023. Tedd was generous, kind and one of the wildest creative minds I have ever known. Over the last number of years and beyond his own work, he has helped mentor and inspire many choreographers across the country. I don't really know how to talk yet about this loss. I still feel as though he can't be gone.

Here is the newsletter we sent out with a poem (next page) that Tedd helped me edit about his schoolhouse space:

It is difficult to express the loss, the wild flow and empty unsettling as we learned of Tedd's passing. Tedd through decades has been an inspiration to so many in our community. His imagination was unparalleled and his work as a mentor was compassionate and brazenly honest. When Sylvie Bouchard and I came together to choose a choreographer for our new duet, the first name on the list was Tedd and he graciously offered us time and space with him at his schoolhouse. We had such rich times creating in the studio, eating and laughing, and in the evenings viewing each other's works on video, sharing perspectives and wondering about our long lives in dance.

We will miss you so terribly Tedd, your humour, wisdom and vital contribution. We send our heartfelt care to your close colleagues, family and friends and all the collaborators past and future who will feel the loss of your presence here with us.



Photo of Ted's piano by Gerry Trentham

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in an old school house
on a corner on chemin D'Aylmer
the Buddha sits at a window
the sun of a lost summer

still rises. as if COVID is
a daydream it angles
to shadow the dragon
and warns the school

room. the black grand plays
silently, a mic rests low
to listen, the wood burning stove
unemployed on this bright day

sifts through ashes. the Baker lake
carvings remind us of how old
this land is and that
we are but a scratch

of dance. the scotch and port
stand tall to drink
the light and whisper
"is it not day's end?"

Phil Strong is known to many in our dance community, as we have danced to his extraordinary range of compositions. Generous, precise and deeply kind, he was a model of care and artistic rigour. He worked with our team at Fujiwara Dance Inventions on Denise's last two works, **Eunoia** and **Moving Parts**. We danced to Phil's compositions and on tour with Eunoia Phil would be our tour guide inviting us for a Moose dinner at his family home or trekking us to the top of Signal Hill in St. John's on a day off. Phil was so curious and so generous. He was so wide awake for each adventure. We miss him terribly.

Lorraine, Tedd and Phil left us too soon - they were still vital creators. They connected far beyond that of colleagues through deep artful conversations and the kind of play that only friends can share.



And now as I write this my dear friend and Pounds board member, **Troy Emery Twigg** has lost the fight for his life. I really do not know how to share this loss. It has been two months and I continue to not be able to grasp the force of his life and passing. There is much to say here that shouldn't have been a part of Troy's end here with us...

As one of the settlers uninvited to the lands of he and his ancestors, the old wounds that colonization has inflicted, the brutality of a genocide and the continued neglect of our Indigenous community's needs are taking a next generation of creatives, healers and leaders from our artistic community and community at large. Troy was a gift in my life – full of life and energy to rail against injustice, and he taught me so much about the courage that it takes to speak. He was so full of life in a way that could make us laugh until our tears were running down our cheeks. I miss him deeply. He was a guide for me and a joy to be with.



HONOURING OUR SUPPORTERS

Resilience. How do we find essential vision and any kind of optimism to bounce back from these deep cuts and losses? Yes, we had survived the pandemic, and we were off and running with a number of new films and projects. We found some government funds to replace the lost revenues that made up almost half of our overall income and now, when we are experiencing the real costs of these past years, there is less support set up for recovery. We move tentatively into our 2023/2024 season. These coming years will be the real test of our resilience.

Part of that survival is due to remarkable individuals who have helped sustain us, with often unseen and unacknowledged support. This year, I want to start a new section of our report about our supporters and each year, I will share more about these remarkable individuals.

This year, we pay tribute to lbs/sq" supporters who have been with us for many of our almost 30 years – the famous Butcher Trio, who I simply know as my sisters. While many artists cannot afford to live in Toronto, the sisters have contributed to our survival and made it possible for me to continue to centre my work in Toronto. Here is the Butcher Trio (left, below).



Photos of supporters by the Sisters, Wendy Trentham, Jeremy Mimmagh

I would also like to acknowledge my father, who never missed a major show and knew all the dancers and collaborators in the company who I often performed with. Here he is, at Fujiwara's performance of *Eunoia* with Miko Sobreira. And my brother, Rod who never missed an opportunity to send a donation to Pounds along with his long list of donations.



Photo by Gerry Trentham

PROJECTS

We at lbs/sq” are grateful for the incredible experience of the 2022/2023 season. Here is what we did:

GRAVITY OF DESCENT

We completed the filming of **Gravity of Descent** on Tkaronto’s beaches and are now completing the final colouring for our pre-screening premiere in 2023/24 including applications to our long list of international festivals where we have been fortunate to be selected or award winners. Stay tuned for details about the premiere.



Photo by Michael Mortley



Denise Fujiwara and William Yong in photo by Mayumi Lashbrook

VALLEY OF SHADOWS

We have also been working alongside Fujiwara Dance, as William Yong and his team complete the final sound score for **Valley of Shadows** – a film produced by and created with Denise Fujiwara with co-production support from Pounds, written and performed by Gerry. The team filmed images and poetry from Gerry’s early years growing up in rural Alberta.

9 EASY DANCES

Next was the shooting of a new film, **9 Easy Dances** by Nora Rosenthal – Gerry plays her father, the well-known actor, Alan Rosenthal (who also plays a role in the film). I have seen the final cut and congratulations to Nora, whom I first met when I choreographed at the Canadian Children’s Dance Theatre over a decade ago. We can’t wait to show this truly remarkable film, where Nora so bravely shares her family’s connection as her mother deals with terminal illness.

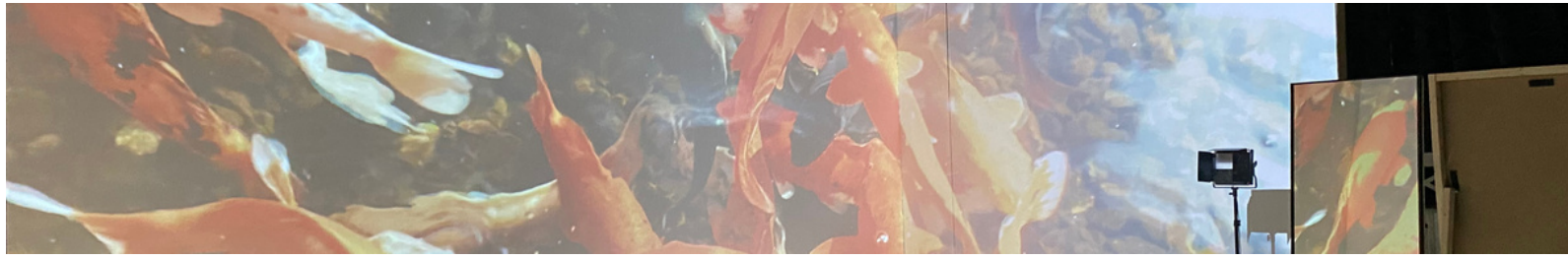
MORE PROJECTS

In September, Gerry helped with Shannon Litzenberger’s **World After Dark** remount, before heading to Montreal to rehearse and perform Zab Maboungou’s **Hâltérite** at Agora de la danse. About this performance, Gerry says, “This was possibly one of the most challenging and profound performances of my life – asked to be present with an emptiness of presence imprisoned in a human zoo. Working with Zab Maboungou, for even such a short period, changed the origins of how I think and move”.

In Buffalo, NY with David Oliver’s new Revelation Theatre, Gerry created a new choreographic/theatre work called **Infinite Distances**. The work was dedicated to bringing performers, Tea Krzykowski, Megan Evans, Nancy Hughes, Dominic Giambra, and Damario Burks together to deal with the real challenges of race and gender within an American context.

Photos by Gerry Trentham





Still, during the busy month of October, Gerry began creating with 20 senior artists on the **Older & Reckless** commission by Peter Chin. Unfortunately, along with most of the cast, Gerry caught COVID and was unable to perform the work at Harbourfront.

BUTOH/VOICE WORKSHOP

After some time in Alberta to research his new book and visit his aging father, Gerry returned to work with Denise on an annual **Butoh/Voice workshops** and **Eunoia** rehearsal, completing the season with our very successful return to live workshop teaching. In January 2023, Denise Fujiwara and Gerry headed to Rosebud, Alberta to teach their Butoh/Voice curriculum. All three years of the program participated in the four-day workshop in the deep beauty of the Alberta winter.



ARRIVALS LEGACY VOICE

Thanks to the work with Danielle Wilson and Brock University, Diane Roberts, Michael Caldwell, Gary Logan and Gerry came together to support the development and evolution of their new co-production **Arrivals Legacy Voice Practice** – a brainchild of a long collaboration between Gerry Trentham and Arrivals Personal Legacy Project Director, Diane Roberts.

OTHER PROJECTS

Then, a quick trip to Edmonton to shoot footage for the ***Buoyancy*** film with Alex Bolt and the amazing antics of Tia Kushniruk, as we returned to the studio where she first learned to dance.

Gerry choreographed the ***Tempest*** at Kleinman's Music Hall in Buffalo, accompanied by the world-famous Buffalo Philharmonic. This also gave Gerry the time to write and begin structural editing of his new, possibly soon-to-be-published, book on performance practice.

Next, was rehearsals with Maxine Heppner. ***My Heart is a Spoon*** film is based on the 2012 duet Gerry danced with Takako Sagawa, which later arrived in Montreal for a two-week film residency in May and is soon to be released.

Gerry and Sylvie Bouchard performed one of Tedd Robinson's last works in a Bouchardanse production at the Citadel in Toronto between May 10-13.

Gerry then worked with creator, Mayumi Lashbrook on her new work, ***Enemy Lines*** that premiered at the Theatre Centre in Toronto.





Photo by Gerry Trentham

ARRIVALS LEGACY VOICE: PART 2

Lopa Sircar, Rosemary Georgeson, Gayle Murphy, Diane Robert and Gerry all arrived in Vancouver to present the next **Arrivals Legacy Voice** workshop. The work was a powerful indication of the power of this new voice/body/ performance process and practice. With participants across the continent with extremely diverse backgrounds and experiences came together with deep respect and honour and moved this work forward exponentially.

THE END OF A BUSY SEASON

Our season ended in celebration. If you made it this far in our report you get a treat, a buoyant sneak peek of some footage for our **Buoyancy** film edited by Alex Bolt.

After shooting Tia with Alex in Edmonton, Calder White with Dani Long and Dan Loan in Vancouver, and Aria Evans and Michael Mortley with Phil Kim in Toronto, the team met for two weeks in Toronto. Filmed by Phil Kim and Michael Mortley to experiment with film but also further research the new live-work Buoyancy of Light for Pounds 30th anniversary in 2025/26. A true call to uncover your own queerness no matter who you are or who you associate yourself with.

You can view the film [here](#). We ask that you do not share the link and let others discover it!

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR GENEROUS SUPPORTERS!

During such a busy time of transformation, we want to thank the Pounds community. We are deeply grateful to our public funders, a host of individual and corporate donors, and the partner organizations who make it possible to continue to create our art and educational programming.



All unnamed photos featured are by Gerry Trentham.

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