

**FREE FALLING:  
A CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS  
DOUBLE BILL**



**In the Fire by Femmes du Feu Creations  
&  
Fish at the Bottom of the Sea  
by The Screaming Goats Collective**



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**FREE FALLING:  
A CONTEMPORARY CIRCUS DOUBLE BILL**

**Free Falling is a unique double feature that explores the depth of loss and hope through the powerful mediums of circus and storytelling.**

**In the Fire (Welland, ON) and Fish at the Bottom of the Sea (Calgary, AB) examine relationships, grief and healing, while employing the use of unique circus apparatuses specifically designed to support their stories.**

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**Show Details**

**In The Fire**

**20 min Intermission**

**Sponsored by EightyEight Brewing Company**

**Fish at the Bottom of the Sea**

**Postshow Talkback led by The Being Human Club**

## ABOUT THE SCREAMING GOATS COLLECTIVE

The Screaming Goats Collective is a non-profit society that creates and presents circus shows that tell stories to provoke social change in Moh'kins'tsis (Calgary, Alberta). Our productions and workshops dismantle disciplinary borders by incorporating the virtuosity of circus and the storytelling power of theatre, evoking a performative experience that is both spell-casting and strange.

We aim to bridge the gap between Eastern and Western Canadian performing art communities by offering workshops, producing events, and hosting an annual work-in-progress showcase for new and emerging circus artists.

**FEMMES** *du* **FEU**  
creations



## ABOUT FEMMES DU FEU CREATIONS

Femmes du Feu Creations is a not-for-profit organization with three primary missions: performance creation, education, and sector development in circus and dance in rural and urban communities in Ontario, prioritizing the Niagara region. Since 2007, Femmes du Feu have been actively creating and presenting aerial circus works, researching innovative ways to combine their contemporary dance and choreographic backgrounds with their aerial circus skills. FdFC creates performance work through collaboration with artists across disciplines, combining contemporary circus/dance with artistic curiosity, risk and reflection.

# **FEMMES DU FEU CREATIONS**

## **In the Fire**

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### **Creative Team**

**Concept & Creation by: Holly Treddenick**

**Direction: Monica Dottor**

**Performer (s): Holly Treddenick**

**Original Score: John Gzowski**

**Dramaturge & Aerial consultant: Angola Murdoch**

**Costuming: Sara Torrie, Tanis MacArthur, Stacie Patterson**

**Lighting Design: Peter Benedetti**

**Video Projection: Peter Benedetti**

**Set Design: Peter Benedetti**

**Apparatus Design and Build: Upstage Fabrication**

**Accessibility Consultant: Erin Ball**

**Memoir & Movement: Sara Porter**

### **Past Collaborators**

**Choir: Opus 8**

**Choreographic Dramaturge: Sarah Poole (CCAFT Residency collaborator)**

**Aerial coaching and dramaturgy: Angola Murdoch**

**Accessibility Consultant: Alex Bulmer**

**IN THE FIRE has been generously supported by the Toronto Arts Council, Ontario Arts Council, Canada Council for the Arts, Theatre Gargantua, MICC Commissioning Group at TOHU and PEAK Performances at Montclair State University.**



# **THE SCREAMING GOATS COLLECTIVE**

## **Fish at the Bottom of the Sea**

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### **Creative Team**

**Nicole Schafenacker - Playwright, Dramaturg**

**Liz Hobbs - Director**

**Léda Davies - Eve, Choreographer**

**Anne-Marie Hivert - Stage Manager**

**Ashley Weckesser - Sound Designer**

**Alexandra Prichard - Lightng Designer**

**Camille Craig - Sound Operator**

**Hannah Fisher - Costume Consultant**

**Aldona Barutowicz (Aldona B Creative) - Publicist**

**Previous Mentorship from: Lin Snelling (Movement),  
Scott Smallwood (Sound)**

**Fish at the Bottom of the Sea has been generously support  
by Canada Council for the Arts**

# **Playwright Note-**

## **Fish at the Bottom of the Sea**

“The upside down body or the body spinning in space may allow us to enter into a different emotional terrain than we normally inhabit.... We are thrilled when gravity appears to be broken or the spine bends in a way that is seldom seen. Engaging the physics that act on our bodies in a daring way can widen our field of vision; it can illuminate corners of the human experience.” (Schafenacker & Davies, *Crossing an Impossible Threshold*, 2023)

**Fish at the Bottom of the Sea and In the Fire are joined together by their desire to alchemize the edges of the human condition into virtuosic aerial circus performance. To me, this virtuosity mirrors the high wire act we all find ourselves performing at some point through the risks of living and loving.**

**I wrote Fish at the Bottom of the Sea years ago when I was in my early 20s. It was sparked by personal grief and the simple question — how will I get to ‘the other side’ of this? In the thick of that experience I felt how grief demands that we become someone new — someone who can weather the particular loss we are moving through. This play is about feeling one’s way through that dark corridor and through the unknown of how we reorganize into a self beyond the one we were before we experienced a particular loss, regret, or disenchantment.**

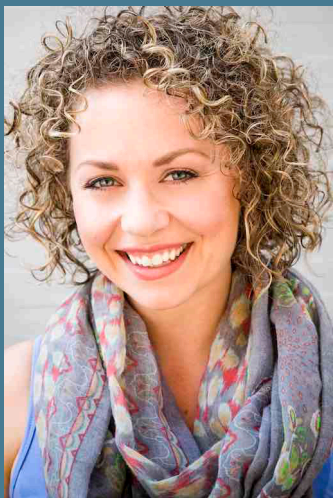
**I chose to name the character “Eve” because her journey feels akin to the mythic one of eating the apple and falling from innocence. We all make this inevitable, necessary journey in one way or another, probably many times. As Salman Rushdie has written, “In our deepest natures, we are threshold-crossing beings”. We may yearn for who we were before a particular experience changed us but it’s in the breaking open of our world and ourselves that the knowledge that comes from experience can shine through.**

**Fish became a play, rather than a poem or a story, because it is meant to be performed. It is meant to be shared through the body and the voice and to draw on one of our oldest rituals as humans: live storytelling. The adaptation of Fish into an aerial performance captures the visceral sensation of the world being flipped upside-down that often accompanies loss. Likewise, in In the Fire Holly Treddenick challenges gravity through circus to celebrate her father’s courageous life’s work as a firefighter.**

**Fish was sparked by a personal loss but as time has passed the question of “how will I (we) get to ‘the other side’ of this’?” has expanded to hold other griefs: collective, systemic, and environmental. There is renewal, power, and beauty that comes with no longer needing to escape, but allowing the reality of our fragile selves and world in.**

**-Nicole Schafenacker, Playwright  
Whitehorse, Yukon**

# Meet the Artists



## **Léda Davies - Performer, Eve (Fish at the Bottom of the Sea) & Choreographer**

*Originally from Calgary, AB, Léda has been an active member of Canada's professional theatre, dance, and circus scene for over a decade. Léda has performed across Canada and worldwide with some of Canada's leading theatrical companies, including touring to Japan with Green Fools Theatre, and across Canada and the US with The Old Trout Puppet Workshop and Quest Theatre. Léda spent 6 years in Montreal, QC training in circus with renowned coaches from Cirque du Soleil and the National Circus School. Her aerial skills have been featured in music videos, stage productions and outdoor festivals in Montreal, Toronto, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton*

*In 2020, Léda completed her MFA in Theatre Practice at the University of Alberta, with a focus on aerial circus movement in theatre. Since then she has taught performance analysis at the University of Calgary's School of Creative and Performing Arts and acting, performance creation and movement in Drama at the University of Alberta*

*Whether on stage at the National Arts Centre, in a freight elevator for a site-specific performance, or hanging off of a 5-story building, Léda tenaciously blends physicality and storytelling in everything she does. For more information visit: [www.ledadavies.com](http://www.ledadavies.com) or follow her blog <https://circusmonsterleda.wordpress.com/>*



## **Nicole Schafenacker — Playwright, Dramaturg (Fish at the Bottom of the Sea)**

*NICOLE SCHAFENACKER is a writer, artist and researcher residing on the traditional territory of the Kwanlin Dün First Nation and Ta'an Kwäch'än Council outside of Whitehorse, Yukon. Her work explores body memory, intimate geographies, liminal spaces at the threshold of change, and hopeful acts/relationships between humans and place.*

*She is the playwright of Fish at the Bottom of the Sea and is thrilled to see this unique interdisciplinary creation come to life after many years of dreaming and experimenting with her collaborators.*

*Nicole's current practice is focused on creating projects in the north at the intersection of arts, social justice, and environmental stewardship. Recent favourite projects include being an artist in residence with Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society Yukon Chapter where she created a site specific, community engaged project, Corridors in the Chasàn Chùa/McIntyre Creek wildlife corridor; and developing a research-creation public art project entitled Ecologies of Intimacy that has been shown at Theatre in the Bush (Ramshackle Theatre) in Whitehorse, and at the (s)hiver winter arts festival and the Dawson City International Short Film Festival in Dawson City, YT. She'll soon be publishing an edited collection of visual art, creative writing and interviews called Generative Resilience: Creative responses to climate crisis in the north featuring voices from across the Yukon and NWT, with the Dechinta Centre for Research and Learning.*



## **Liz Hobbs — Director (Fish at the Bottom of the Sea)**

*Liz is a theatre director, creator, performer, festival coordinator and university instructor based in Edmonton, Alberta. She holds an MFA in Directing from the University of Alberta. Selected directing credits include Everybody, The Secret in the Wings, Iphigenia 2.0 and Bug (University of Alberta), 13 Encounters at the Bottom of the Sea (Fringe Theatre Season Spotlight Series), Featuring Loretta, Criminal Genius, An Evening with Satan, Judith, The End of Civilization and Dirt (Punctuate! Theatre), Encounters and assistant directing Venus in Fur (Citadel Theatre), Win the Warrior (Pandoric Productions), Fish at the Bottom of the Sea (Screaming Goat Collective/Alberta Circus Festival), Romeo and Juliet and The Secret Garden (Shuswap Theatre), Macbeth and A Midsummer Night's Dream (Theatre Prospero) and assistant directing 4000 Miles (Westport Country Playhouse). Liz co-founded Punctuate! Theatre as Artistic Director, was the Associate Artistic Director with Theatre Prospero, managed and curated several theatre festivals and is currently the Creative Director of Pandoric Productions and the Director of Programming and Communications for the Edmonton International Street Performers Festival.*



## **Anne-Marie Hivert — Stage Manager (Fish at the Bottom of the Sea)**

*Anne-Marie plays multiple roles in the art community as circus artist, instructor and cultural worker. She has been performing around the province of Quebec and was lucky to work with a couple equestrian circus companies as an acrobat, choreographer and director. As an instructor, she has taught many circus arts classes around Montreal and, in the last 6 years, in the Calgary area. After getting her degree in cultural management, Anne-Marie has been helping multiple organizations and artists with grant writing, and production management. She is now getting back to the production side of live performances and happy to join The Screaming Goats Collective.*



## **Alexandra Prichard — Lighting Designer (Fish at the Bottom of the Sea)**

*Alexandra is a lighting designer, production manager and occasional director. Recent design work includes Underneath the Lintel (Fire Exit Theatre), Gaslight (Vertigo Theatre; Betty Mitchell nomination), Uprooted (Handsome Alice), A World Without Them (Ghost River Theatre), Interrogation (Kawalese Arab Canadian Theatre), In Wonderland (Alberta Theatre Projects), and associate designer for Nevermore (Catalyst Theatre and Vertigo Theatre). She has also worked as the production manager for the Shakespeare Company, Handsome Alice and for One Yellow Rabbit's High Performance Rodeo. In 2019 she directed the world premier of Michaela Jeffery's Wolf on the Ringstrasse for Spirit Fire Theatre, which was named one of the twelve outstanding plays of 2019 by the Calgary Herald. She has long been harbouring a secret desire to integrate circus arts into text-based performance and is so grateful to have been invited in to laugh, cry, play and, of course, scream with these brilliant, beautiful and gritty goats. In the new year Alexandra will be lighting Deadly Murder at Vertigo, where there will be no goats, but if she does her job right, the audience will take care of the screaming.*





## **Ashley Weckesser— Sound Designer (Fish at the Bottom of the Sea)**

*Ashley Weckesser is an Edmonton, AB-based composer and interdisciplinary artist working in the fields of music and sound, visual art and theatre. An early-career artist, her instrumental and graphic score works have premiered at the University of Alberta's Convocation Hall through the University's Experimental Improvisation Ensemble ("XiMe"), Contemporary Music Ensemble and Edmonton's Ultraviolet Ensemble. A recent graduate from the University of Alberta, she has studied composition with Dr. Mark Hannesson and Dr. Scott Smallwood. Her current interests involve music design for video games and film, producing animated graphic scores, working with advanced music software such as Max/MSP, and the visual arts. Her works have won awards for best video game audio design, multiple university scholarships and recently her animated graphic score, A Composer's Nightmare, has been featured in the Toronto 4th Multicultural Film Festival 2021.*

*Ashley's primary goal in her works is emotional storytelling that ignites passion. Music cannot effectively impact listeners without having a story and without having emotion. Ashley has taken a new interest in musical compositions that are designed to explore the impact of music on the conscious and subconscious emotional reactions of both the performers and listeners. Her goals are to design music in both the film and video game industries, as well as live performances (taking multiple forms), that turn the active listener into a participant; creating their own personal story and subsequently emoting on a transcendent level.*



## **Camille Craig— Sound Operator (Fish at the Bottom of the Sea)**

*Camille is a Calgary based Audio Engineer, and the Artistic Producer at Inside Out Theatre. A graduate of the Audio Engineering & Production program at The Centre for Arts & Technology (Kelowna), Camille has worked on projects ranging from sound design for live theatre [ZOO, TWWOH, Parts & Labour, YTC's 'Alice...!' & 'Journey...!' (2022), 'Most Imaginary Worlds'] and film [SCALEY, Lechuza, With Your Life], to podcast producing ['MAD Practice', 'Voices'], description editing, accessibility consulting, & more!*



## **Holly Benedetti— Performer (In The Fire)**

*Holly is an artist, producer, founder and artistic director for Femmes du Feu Creations, and mother of two.*

*Originally from Winnipeg, Holly moved to Toronto in 1995 to attend the 3 year professional training program at The School of Toronto Dance Theater, and has worked professionally as independent and company dancer with several companies, and has toured across Canada, USA and Europe.*

*In 2001 Holly was introduced to the world of circus, beginning as a fire dancer, then moving into the air as an aerialist where her heart really soars.*

*Holly is a passionate advocate for the Ontario circus sector and the local Welland arts sector. Holly serves on the Welland Downtown BIA, the Welland Arts & Culture Advisory Committee, and is co-founder and chair of the Welland Creatives Network. Holly is a graduate of the Canadian College of Osteopathy (2011) and runs an osteopathic practice called BlueBird Osteopathy.*

*Holly relocated to Welland after 25 years in Toronto with her family in July, 2019 to open a new circus and multi-arts center, The Bank Art House with her husband, Peter Benedetti. The Bank is home to Femmes du Feu Creations, and has become a hub for the arts and culture sector locally, regionally and beyond.*



## **Peter Benedetti— Technical Director (In The Fire)**

*Peter Benedetti has been working in the entertainment production industry for more than 20 years. He specializes as a rigger, sound technician, and as production manager. He has worked extensively in music and concerts across Canada and the USA independently and for many companies including Frontier Sound And Light, Sound Plus, Christie Lights, and the IATSE union. Peter has Production Managed many productions including the OLG Stage at Toronto Pride, Toronto Canada Day Woodbine Park, Veld Festival, Grey Cup Celebration Toronto, Hamilton SuperCrawl. He has toured with bands such as I Mother Earth, Burton Cummings, Biff Naked, 54-40, and many more.*

*Peter has been working in the circus industry for more than 15 years as a rope access technician and rigger, apparatus designer & fabrication. Peter has worked extensively for companies such as Femmes du Feu Creations, LookUp Theater, 7 Doigts De La Main, The Alberta Circus Arts Festival, St. John's International Circus Festival, and with many other companies and independent across Canada. He has toured with Cirque Musica, Kinky Boots, Rock Of Ages, he has installed arena shows for Cirque Du Soleil.*

*Peter is founder of Upstage Dynamics Inc, which specializes in design, fabrication, technical direction and production management for the production industry.*

*In 2019 Peter relocated to Welland, Ontario, with his wife and 2 kids where he purchased a former bank to create a venue and multi-arts center now called The Bank Art House. Peter designed the venue, managed the renovation, and is technical director. The Bank opened in June 2022.*

# Meet our **Talk-Back Hosts...**



## **Lauren Cowley (Thursday Evening)**

*Lauren is a Canadian Certified Counsellor, dedicated to helping clients move through life's challenges while embracing their messy, imperfect selves. With a background as a yoga teacher and former professional figure skater, Lauren brings a holistic perspective to therapy, incorporating creativity, art, movement, and mindfulness when appropriate. This often looks like exploring the mind-body connection to help clients make sense of the sometimes conflicting experiences between what they think and believe & what they feel and experience.*

*She believes that the goal of therapy isn't always to "feel better," but rather, to "get better at feeling" so that we can hold ourselves gently through the challenging emotions, without self-abandoning. Therefore, from a place of gentleness and curiosity, she aims to help people navigate the thoughts, feelings, and sensations that seem too big to carry alone.*

*When she's not in counsellor mode, you can find her in the mountains rock climbing or hiking with her two rascal golden retrievers Copper and Penny, initiating impromptu dance parties, and learning new songs on the guitar and piano*



## **Theresa Rybchinski (Friday Evening)**

*My name is Theresa Rybchinski (she/her), and I am a Registered Social Worker and Mental Health Psychotherapist with a Master of Clinical Social Work specializing in Addiction and Mental Health. I am passionate about supporting individuals navigating trauma, substance use disorders, addiction, burnout, and other stress-related challenges.*

*As a body-centred, somatic-based therapist trained in Sensorimotor Psychotherapy and Accelerated Resolution Therapy (A.R.T.), my approach is person-centred, trauma-informed, and anti-oppressive. Drawing from polyvagal theory, interpersonal neurobiology, liberation psychology, attachment theory, and internal family systems, I integrate these frameworks into a holistic and individualized practice.*

*Over the past eight years, I have worked in harm reduction, Indigenous communities and programs, and addiction treatment centers, supporting people who have experienced diverse forms of trauma and loss. These professional experiences, combined with my own lived journey of overcoming mental health challenges, have shaped my deep commitment to creating spaces of comfort, compassion, and empathy. I strive to help others understand their experiences, feel seen in their humanity, and build the capacity and resilience needed to move toward empowerment and healing.*



## **Sarah Kinnie (Saturday Matinee)**

*Sarah is a Registered social worker and therapist at Being Human Club in Calgary. Sarah was drawn to this show's themes of grief and loss and because she sees everyday in her work how important it is to explore these difficult topics so that we can, somehow, feel more fully alive. Sarah knows deeply the challenge of living in this wild and uncertain world and has worked hard to learn how to help others to keep going despite the odds. Sarah believes that performative art provides us powerful possibilities for collective growth and says that collective witnessing, expression, and mutual support can help us regain our sense of stability and heal us into new ways of being.*

*Sarah loves exploring shows like Free Falling, and is excited to be a part of the after-show-chat and hearing what this show brings up for us and what it might inspire to explore in our own lives.*

**The Screaming Goats Collective would like to acknowledge the generous contributions of our Kickstarter donors:**

**Executive Producers:**

Christine Clements, Bonnie Wong, Sebastien Davies, Luigi Audia, Kelly Medeiros, Megan Sutherland, Tyler Remington, Samara Von Rad

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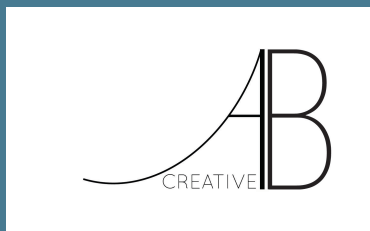
Sergey Kochergan, Nikki and Christopher Loach, Geoffrey Brown, Thea Patterson, Richard Huntley, Simon Mallett, Dermot Murphy, Matt P, Scholastique Huleu, Valerie Campbell, Stacey Sterling, Phoebe, Kyle, Sarah Wheeldon, Vanessa Padillo Chu, Jed Tomlinson, Nicole Lachance, Anna Davies, Melanie Dreyer-Lude, Adam Calver, Nelize Gignoux, Darren Lee, Don Monty, Marianne Goodvin, Steve Grubich, Paula Davies, Murray Shuturma, Michele Fleiger, Deb Kaloudis, Lynne Croker, Ashley de Nooij, Terri Illingworth, Charles Netto, Lillian Davies, Louise Mackiewicz, Pooja, Audrey Wensley, Sorcha Shanahan, Erin, Ayla, Christopher Coben, Shirley Gillespie, Elizabeth Davies, Allara Gooliaff

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