

PERSONAL CARTOGRAPHIES

An act of resistance in uncertain times

At the beginning of this year we were not sure we could produce a RUTAS 2024 festival. We had been hit with extreme cuts to our funding. We were heart broken. Then our Associate Producer, María Escolán, who had recently joined the team asked what drove Bea and Trevor to create RUTAS in the first place?

"...Easy." (Trevor and Bea rapidly jamming in a stream of consciousness style, as they usually do.)

BEA: we wanted to bring the Americas here...but not any kind of theatre....

TREVOR: right, a theatre that speaks to human rights...

TOGETHER: absolutely...

BEA: ...and to challenge the idea of borders...

TREVOR: maybe more like opening people up to the richness and realities of the continent...

BEA: ... and about the fact that Canada is part of this continent called The Americas...

TREVOR: a TransAmerican vision.

BEA: yes, a TransAmerican vision that brings awareness to the diversity of cultures and peoples that inhabit the land...we are not one group of people...and of course, to raise the profile of our communities...

TREVOR: ...a festival that creates a space where communities connect to their roots...

BEA: like a map...

TREVOR: ...of the rivers and roads that connect us...

Beat.

TOGETHER: RUTAS!

Silence.

BEA: But does that mean anything anymore?

As I walked home, I recalled a recent conversation I've had with a number of artists from the Latinx community and how they have been impacted by the many shows they have witnessed at RUTAS since 2012; how these pieces changed their perspectives as artists; how they were inspired to think about theatre and performance outside the box; and more importantly, how these works from across the Americas incited them to connect with their roots, their heritages, and think of themselves as artists inhabiting many cultures, languages and influences. And above all how RUTAS had helped them to begin collaborations across the land/continent.

The answer was clear: imagining better futures together is what art does best.

Challenges have always become artistic opportunities for us at Aluna. Having to reduce our programming because of funding cuts led us to think of more intimate shows, relevant pieces that speak to urgent issues that affect us in the now: Personal Cartographies.

This year we draw inspiration from the concept of cartography. Rather than thinking of it as a mapping of a geographical area, personal cartographies trace our personal experiences within the historical and socio-political contexts we inhabit. Where the archives of our histories meet our repertoire of experiences, we find the tools to begin imagining better futures.

We are thrilled to have in Toronto these amazing artists who have accepted the invitation to present at RUTAS 2024. They are not afraid to push the boundaries of the art form. And most of all, they are also socially committed artists whose cartographies are an act of resistance.