

**Year-in-review
2020**



Recipient of the 2020 Community Arts Award by the Toronto Arts Foundation

By Isorine marc
Founder, Executive and Programming Director
Excerpts from Acceptance Speech

"Jamii is about to celebrate its 10-year anniversary (2011-2021) and this award feels like a recognition for and appreciation of the artistic quality, the depth of our social contract, and our commitment to the Esplanade community. It is also an energizing wind blowing our sails as we look ahead to the next 10 years.

This award goes to the hundreds of artists who define Jamii; to the hundreds of Esplanadians who have participated in arts-making with us; to those who have worked with us through the years, paid or unpaid, including directors of our board; and to those who kept on encouraging us in their own way during our journey.

At Jamii, we define our success by the legacy of qualitative memories we ignite for all "Esplanadians" - people of all ages who have taken part in the Jamii's journey. By creating shared memories, we are creating stronger connections and bonds between people. In doing so, we create a sense of belonging, ownership and identity for the people engaged in the work we do in the community. This circles back to our mandate of enhancing social cohesion through the arts.

A "memory" doesn't happen overnight. It lives through time - and often enough, it changes and transforms with time.

In 2020, we worked with 91 artists;
We organized 101 workshops;
We hosted 166 workshop participants;
We counted 2300 audience members;
We produced 34 public events,
And all of this, during a pandemic.

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My hope is that, as we celebrate our 10th anniversary, people will be sharing "Jamii memories": things they have done with us that will connect all of us together: "Do you remember when...?". This "thing" they'll remember will be the social glue that keeps us united - even in challenging times.

And I hope, I sincerely hope that Jamii will continue building the capacity to pursue its mandate, continue collaborating with creative people to create the qualitative memories we will share, and continue building a legacy for all Esplanadians.

Oh, and on a personal note, something else I shared in my acceptance speech for the award: my hope is to inspire my daughters with the work I do. If I inspire them, chances are that Jamii will inspire countless other girls and boys. And this is the the ultimate goal - so that the work carries on to the next generation."



Wind Stories Toronto

“Wind Stories” connected communities in Toronto, Wawa, Pikangikum First Nation, and Wolfe Island. Community members were invited to co-create a series of portraits of fellow neighbours through creative writing, photography and visual arts. The project took place in Toronto from Jan 27 to Feb 8 and more than 50 people participated in the creative process. In February, the 22 portraits were first displayed at Performing Arts Lodge and then at the Four Seasons Performing Arts Centre in partnership with the Canadian Opera Company.

ARTISTS: ANDREW PATTERSON, DAN BERGERON
FEB 13 & 15: EXHIBIT DISPLAY AT THE FOUR SEASONS PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE
450 EXHIBIT VIEWERS



photos: Isorine Marc & Aela Kuria



Wind Stories Pikangikum

In February 2020, the Jamii team traveled to Pikangikum First Nation in Northern Ontario to bring “Wind Stories” to life. We partnered with the Pikangikum Education Authority and Eenchokay Birchstick School to invite people to create a portrait of fellow community members. 36 people were involved, and together we created 18 portraits.

It was truly an honor to be warmly welcomed into the community and listen to the shared stories.

**ARTISTS: ISORINE MARC,
GILLIAN MAPP, MAHLIKAH AWE:RI**





Kisanii Hub Itinerant Performances

When the pandemic hit us all in March, we believed that it was vital to find ways to maintain social cohesion within our community, fight social isolation, and support artists. As a nimble organization, we explored different ways to bring live arts to our community with a new format for live performances. The Kisanii Hub, our mobile theatre stage, was our adaptive response.

On March 30th, we decided to produce the first of a series of 10 mobile & itinerant performances in the streets and courtyards of the Esplanade community for residents to watch from their balconies, doorsteps, front yards, and windows.

1000 AUDIENCE MEMBERS



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Kisanii Hub Itinerant Performances

While Jamii garnered unexpected visibility (national media coverage) through our innovative response to the pandemic, more importantly, we received enthusiastic and emotional responses to our programming with many heartfelt, emotional and sincere reactions from residents and the wider public. It was a powerful experience, to say the least.

MARCH 30: DOMANIQUE GRANT

APRIL 1: LEEN HAMO, IMAN ABDUL RAZZAK

APRIL 3: JEREMIAH SPARKS

APRIL 6: SARA LUEY & JIM ADAMS

APRIL 20: JOHNNY TORONTO

APRIL 22: ALESSANDRO MONTELLI

MAY 3: JEREMIAH SPARKS (WITH BUILDING ROOTS)

MAY 13: LUA SHAYENNE & CECE HABA

MAY 20: ARLENE PACULAN

**JUNE 4: CLEON WONG, AYELEN LIBERONA,
MALAVIKA SANTHOSH, EKATERINA**



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photos: Laura Dittmann & Isorine Marc



Indigenous Peoples Day

On June 21st, it was our deepest honour to celebrate National Indigenous Peoples Day in David Crombie Park. We were graced with drumming, singing and dancing by Sue Croweagle, Michele Perpaul, Brianna Pitawanakwat, Nimkii Osawamick, Danny Mckenna, and Marija Bonaparte.

JUNE 21 - 2 PERFORMANCES
150 AUDIENCE MEMBERS

In November, we organized a series of 4 workshops at Market Lane Public School and Downtown Alternative School with Sue Croweagle, Nimkii Osawamick, and Marija Bonaparte.

NOV 4 & 6 - SCHOOL WORKSHOPS
80 PARTICIPANTS



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Wind Stories Live in Toronto

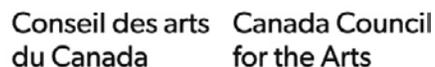
Following the creation of a series of portraits of local people, made by fellow neighbours, a wonderful team of artists came together to bring eight of these portraits to life, through music, dance, and vocals. A unique way to share and celebrate each other stories.

ARTISTS: Ashima Suri, Jonelle Sills, Jeremiah Sparks, Michael Caldwell, Paulina O’Kieffe-Anthony, Sue Croweagle, Heidi Chan, Raha Javanfar, with hosts Ryan G. Hinds & Indrit Kasapi.

JUNE 27 - 2 PERFORMANCES - CROMBIE PARK
JULY 17 - 2 PERFORMANCES - CROMBIE PARK
JULY 18 - 2 PERFORMANCES - ST JAMES PARK
260 AUDIENCE MEMBERS



photos: Laura Dittmann



Unlocked Art Video Creation

"Unlocked: A Flow of Colourful Connections in Lockdown" is a short film/art video that captures the personal journey of eleven women during the COVID-19 pandemic, exploring how months of isolation has affected their sense of identity. From isolated days that connected them with close family, to sleepless nights which drew them to take a closer look inward, to a new relation to time that led them to dive into forgotten interests, these stories invite the viewer to contemplate how the pandemic has impacted each of us differently.

Filmed entirely in the Esplanade neighbourhood, these interwoven stories express feelings of joy and comfort, melancholy and hope, loss and love through poetry, song, dance, sculpture, painting and photography.



Unlocked Premiere & Awards

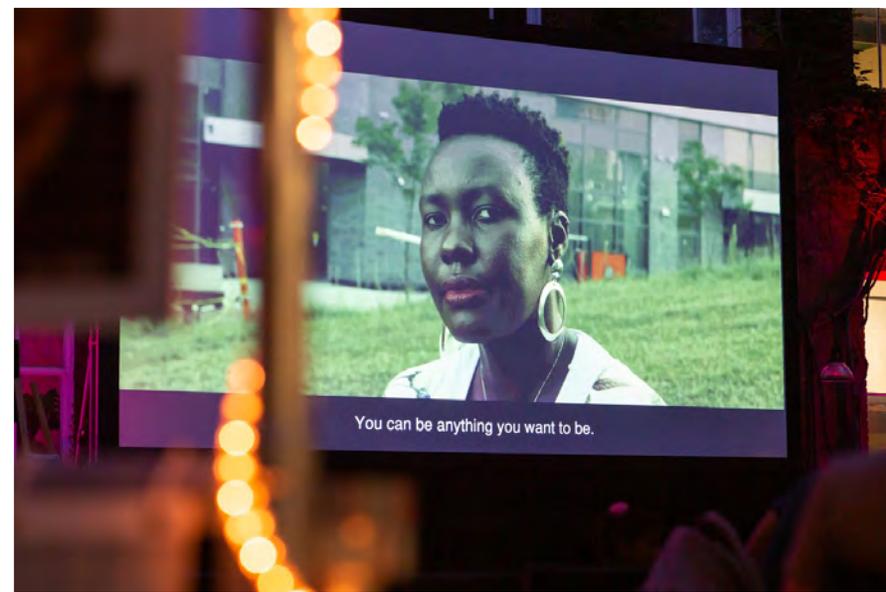
"Unlocked" was premiered on July 24 & 25, at the Berkeley Castle Courtyard, Toronto. "Unlocked" was produced and presented in partnership with Canadian Stage.

CREDITS:

Directed and Produced by: Charmaine Kachibaia & Isorine Marc
Director of Photography & Editor: Nick Kay
See full film credits on www.jamii.ca/unlocked

AWARDS & OFFICIAL SELECTION:

Five Continents International Film Festival #42 (Puerto la Cruz, Venezuela): Best Experimental Short Film
DIVERSITY FEEDBACK Film Fest. (NY, USA): Official selection.
Canada Shorts: Award of Distinction.
Docs Without Borders Film Fest. (Nassau, USA): Exceptional Merit
New York Movie Awards (NY, USA): Best Experimental
Yellowknife International Film Festival (Canada): Official selection.
Better Cities Film Festival (NY, USA): Official selection.



photos: Laura Dittmann



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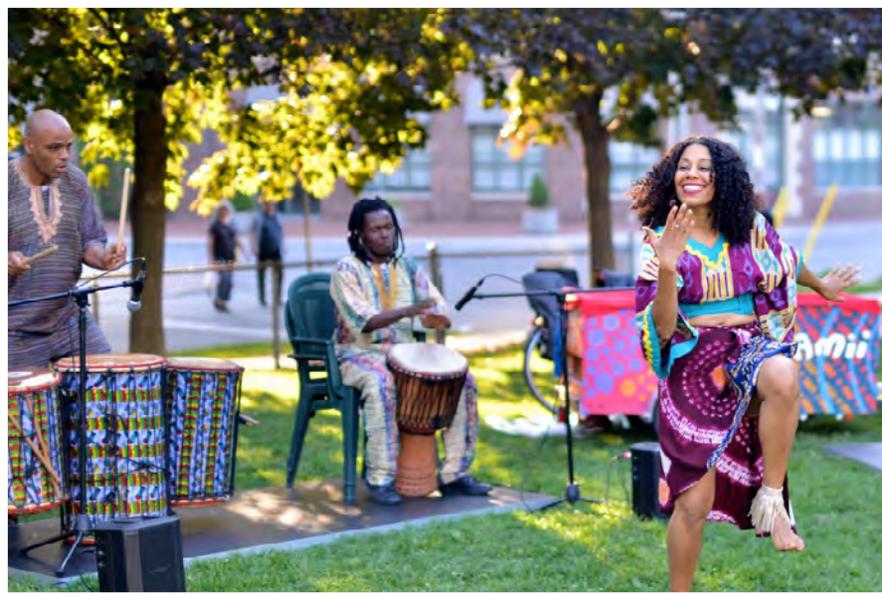
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BERKELEY CASTLE



Lua Shayenne & Andrew Patterson

Lua Shayenne Dance Company took audiences on a water journey by paying respect to Mami Wata or Mother Water. Mami Wata in West Africa is the powerful water goddess that provides spiritual, mental and material healing. This event served as a reminder to us all that Water is Life, and that we should cherish it accordingly.



Andrew Patterson exhibited five pieces of his collection "Mixed Blood Manifesto". In Andrew's words: "This project is a vehicle to share my personal feelings on the topic of identity, primarily through a series of portraits - paintings and conversations I engaged in with various members of the Toronto mixed-race community. What can be learned from a growing demographic that has a more fluid perspective on self and culture? How might this inform social interaction when people have arguably never felt more strongly about identity?".

**AUG 5 & 6 - 4 PERFORMANCES & EXHIBIT
200 AUDIENCE MEMBERS**



Wayo Children's Festival

Jamii produced its first official children's outdoors festival for the Esplanade community: **WAYO** (a Swahili word that means footprint, symbolizing the journey to life).

WAYO brought creativity to the hearts of our youngest community members as it awakened their imaginations and touched their souls through storytelling, song, dance and crafts. We invited Indigenous artist Mahlikah Awe:ri with the performance "Becoming a Thunderbird"; Eman Hillawi and Alexandra Legendre for a lollipop lyra duet; and Bana Stegu and Arlene Paculan for a musical performance. This event was MC'd by Kristi Heath.

AUG 26 - 1 PERFORMANCE DAY
50 AUDIENCE MEMBERS





Hisia Summer

HISIA is a Swahili word for inner feelings, emotions and thoughts. In August, we invited Heidi Chan, Jonelle Sills, Raha Javanfar and Eman Hillawi to connect with one another through a structured improvisation exploring their individual whirlwind of emotions since the pandemic hit us back in March. Although we all are living through the same major event, we all experience different journeys. HISIA was a window into our unique ways for coping throughout the pandemic.

AUG 21 - 2 PERFORMANCES
140 AUDIENCE MEMBERS



photos: Matthew Bennett

Hisia Autumn

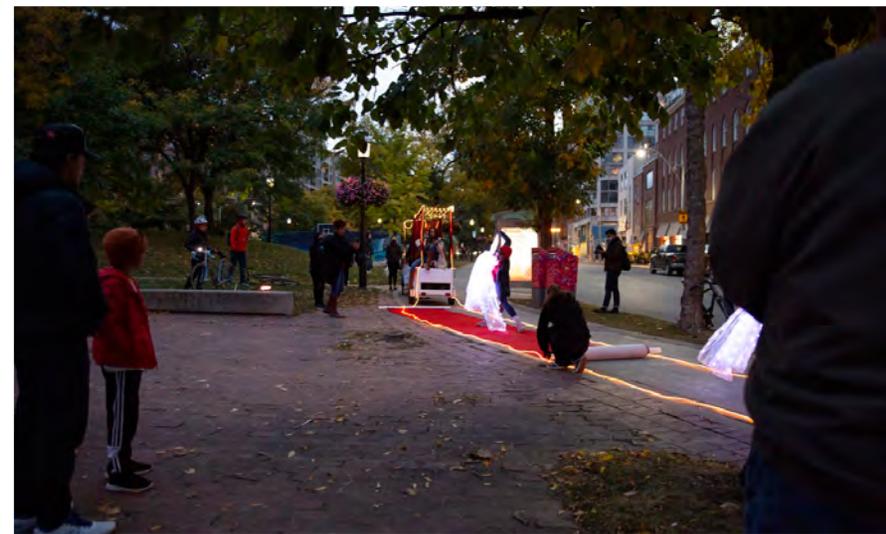
Building on our performances of Hisia in August, these two performances continued the artistic exploration of the emotional roller coaster of the past six months since lockdown was imposed. Fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, anticipation, joy and trust expressed through words, movement, imagery, sound, visual and experiential arts: a delight to the senses.

A series of personal statements within the frame of a common journey.

Performers: Jaz Fairy J, Meryem Alaoui, Nicola Pantin, Sukruti Tirupattur and Yvonne Ng.

Videographer: Ella Cooper. Spoken word artist: Paulina Anthony-O’Kieffe. Music: Evangelia Kambites.

OCT 3 - 2 PERFORMANCES
100 AUDIENCE MEMBERS



Wind Stories Live in Wawa

In the Fall of 2019, Jamii visited Wawa and invited locals to create visual portraits of fellow neighbours, friends or family member.

In September 2020, Jamii came back to Wawa to exhibit this collection of portraits made throughout the province. Along with this beautiful exhibit, Jamii invited local artists to bring a selection of these portraits to life through music, dance, storytelling, and drumming; A whirlwind of stories.

ARTISTS: Damian Binda, Isabella Imperatori, Joanne Poisson, Sheila Rodger, Brian Lachine, Mirinda Patterson and Samatha Stewart. Host: Nadine Kwissiwa. Tech: Marty Rodger. Ambassador: Darren Marshall.

SEPT 19 & 20 - 2 PERFORMANCES
100 AUDIENCE MEMBERS



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Wind Stories Live in Wolfe Island

Similar to the process in both Toronto and Wawa, Jamii traveled back to Wolfe Island to bring the “Wind Stories” portrait exhibit to life. Artists Teilhard Frost, Jason Mercer, Robert Douglas, Terri-Lynn Brennan, Sue Croweagle, Sukruti Tirupattur, Nancy Steele, and Lucas Sherwood, host Heather Kushum Sheedy and tech Cohen Samson treated the audience to a very rich performance with dance, drumming, storytelling, music, and a mix of genres and styles together. A beautiful spirit by the water.

**SEPT 25 & 26 - 2 PERFORMANCES
60 AUDIENCE MEMBERS**



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photos: Susan Bowers

Research For 2021 projects

In October, November and December, Jamii invited four guest artists (dancers/choreographers) to explore the potential of artistic transformation of the Kisanii Hub. Each artist was offered a one-week research period at the rehearsal hall of Canadian Stage.

We are thrilled that the richness of this process will be shared with the community with live performances in our park in 2021.

GUEST ARTISTS: ASHIMA SURI, AYELEN LIBERONA, MICHAEL CALDWELL, LUA SHAYENNE
ARTISTIC COLLABORATORS: ARIA EVANS, DAVID NORSWORTHY, ALEXIA D'AMATO, ANKITA KUMAR-RATTA, RAHA JAVANFAR, HEATHER TIZYA, SLAVA SAPERSHTEYN, MAIRI GREIG, JOCE TWO CROWS TREMBLAY, MIRANDA LIVERPOOL, BRIANNA RENNIE, VANIA DODOO-BEALS, CECE HABA.



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photos: Isorine Marc



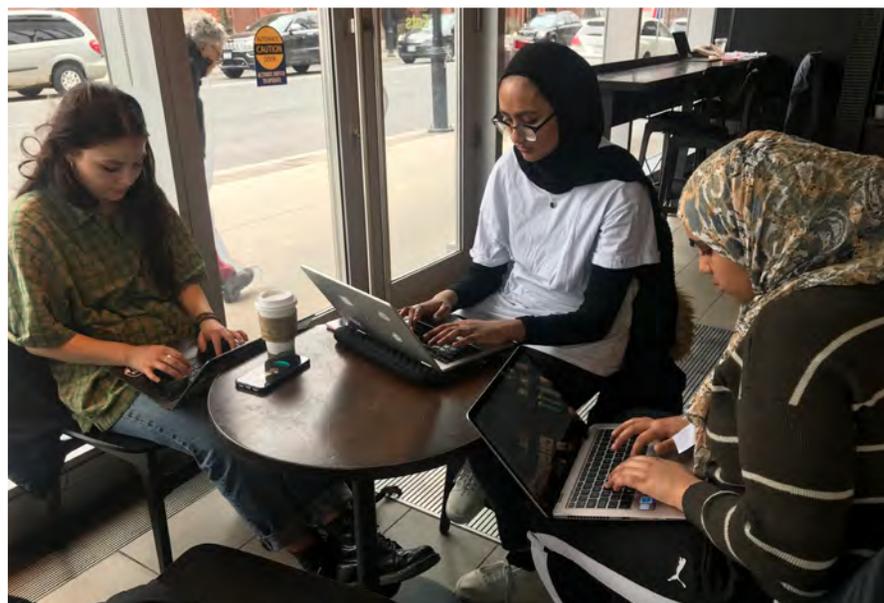
LAINI

Women in Leadership

LAINI is a Swahili word that means to flatten an area with the intent of making it accessible. It is a very similar meaning to “esplanade”, which is a flattened path for people to walk on. LAINI is about giving every woman the confidence and tools to see themselves as leaders; it is about equal chances, and the ability for all to walk the path of leadership.

In 2020, our response to the pandemic was also geared towards our young women and finding ways to offer mental health support. In the Spring, we initiated a series of 11 artist-led online workshops, designed as a safe space to check-in with one another, share our feelings, discover new artists and hopefully find some inspiration. A programme supported by the SLNA and individual donations. A special thank you to Angel Narick.

22 PARTICIPANTS AGED 11-30+
ARTISTS: ISORINE MARC, JACQUIE COMRIE, BRITTA B, DOMANIQUE GRANT, LUA SHAYENNE, ARLENE PACULAN, TAKAKO SEGAWA, DEVONNA MUNROE, ANIKA JOHNSON, GILLIAN MAPP, MALAVIKA SANTHOSH.



TO OUR STAFF

Isorine Marc - Executive and Programming Director
Zarita Adhiambo - Project Coordinator (Jan-July)
Afnan Yakot - Summer Project Coordinator (Gov. of Canada)

TO OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Sharon McMillan & Jim Adams - Co-Presidents
Linda Leistner - Treasurer
Amanda Maragos - Secretary
Aziza Virani, Georgia Reynolds, Nadifa Mohamed,
Walter Azzalini, Zoie Edwards

**AND TO ALL OUR VOLUNTEERS, PARTICIPANTS,
DONORS, AND AUDIENCE MEMBERS**

TO OUR SUPPORTERS AND PARTNERS

Berkeley Castle
Business for the Arts
Cathedral Court Co-Op
Centre d'Accueil Heritage
Logan Foundation
Metcalf Foundation
St Lawrence Neighbourhood Association
Tribe Fitness
Woodsworth Co-Op

And to our 2020 season partner: Canadian Stage

Thank you!



photo: Laura Dittmann



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*See you in 2021
for our 10th anniversary of
programming in the Esplanade!*