

***Upstream Downtown* Show Synopsis**

Sojo and Beagle have begun the ultimate sojourn. They swim upstream in the Don Valley River for the first time since arriving in Lake Ontario several years ago. It's not too long before they are tempted by something delicious bobbing in the water. They bite, they struggle, and a mysterious hand evicts them from their watery dwellings. With their directional and moral compasses thrown off by an earthly landscape, Sojo and Beagle must play their very best "human" in order to survive in a world dominated by suits (not scales) – all the while searching for home, food, room (or reproductive!) mates, and a bit of multispecies' love. To get themselves back on track, Sojo and Beagle must commit the ultimate sacrilege: they go fishing. Turns out one rod leads to another rod, which leads to absolute chaos. A quest for power consumes Sojo, meanwhile Beagle becomes sexually mature. Hiccups along the way include: footcovers, a scientist's petri dish, a pregnancy, and four cans of chatty salmon. A research-based, multimedia, physical theatre play about salmon and humans finding home that is set in Toronto's own Don Valley watershed. *Upstream Downtown* is a dark comedy, a magical reality, a space for the beautiful, the funny, and the grotesque. It loves humanity. It hates humanity. It's fishy.

Salmon are often found on our dinner plates, but are not too often swimming around our minds asking philosophical questions about home, reproductive rights, settler-Indigenous relations, feminism, and interspecies narratives. What can salmon tell us about domestic, public, and watery spaces? Salmon also have a remarkable connection to place, using homing abilities to find their way back to their native streams and rivers. As the co-creators of *Upstream Downtown* are two female artists of European ancestry, living as settlers on Indigenous land, how can we address the complexity of 'home' when our access to land is predicated on the history of colonial/patriarchal violence? How can interspecies performance challenge and influence Western and colonial modes of thinking and knowing? How do we go forward? For Sojo and Beagle, who are just as complexed about these big questions as any of us, the answer is to just keep swimming.