



TORONTO FRINGE FESTIVAL 2018 – DIGITAL PRESS KIT BIRDS MAKE THINK ABOUT FREEDOM

L'Arche Toronto Sol Express is an innovative creative and performing arts program that focuses on developing the talents and skills of artists who with intellectual disabilities. Sol Express collaborates, with professionals to produce original works that range from on- stage performances to visual-art showcases. Sol Express participated in the Disability Arts Showcase at the Art Gallery of Ontario, and has performed in venues such as the Papermill Theatre at Todmorden Mills, The Richmond Hill Centre for the Performing Arts, The Aga Khan Museum and Nathan Phillips Square.

Victoria Freeman is a public historian, multidisciplinary artist/writer, and educator. She is the author of *Distant Relations: How My Ancestors Colonized North America* (2000) and *Always With You*, an account of the impact of her sister's institutionalization for intellectual disability on her entire family, to be published by UBC Press in 2019. She has collaborated on numerous community-based research, public education, and artistic creation projects through Sol Express, First Story Toronto, and JumbliES Theatre, most recently as co-writer of JumbliES' Talking Treaties Spectacle at the Fort York Indigenous Arts Festival in June 2017. She is researcher, co-writer, and co-project lead of *Birds Make Me Think About Freedom*.

Ruth Howard is the founder and Artistic Director of JumbliES Theatre. She and JumbliES have created multi-year residencies resulting in large scale performances, in a series of Toronto neighbourhoods, and lasting Offshoot organizations. She has worked across Canada and in England as a theatre designer, has taught at many universities, colleges and schools, mentored many emerging artists and organizations, and won many awards for her work. In 2015 Ruth and JumbliES produced the west-to-east-coast Train of Thought tour with partners across the country. Her most recent projects with JumbliES include the 2016 Touching Ground Festival of new works in Toronto, and the Four Lands national tour.

JumbliES is a Toronto-based organization with a national and international reach that engages in collaborations between professional artists and diverse people and communities, and equips, mentors and supports others to do so. JumbliES expands where art happens, who gets to be part of it, what form it takes and which stories it tells. This imperative has led us outside of specialized art places, and to place *participation* and *radical inclusion* at the core of our projects. We say *Everyone is welcome!*