

Night Cows: Synopsis

Jovette Marchessault's *Night Cows* begins at dusk. A baby cow, vachette, describes how her mother removes the shackles of the day and society, transforming into a sensual, grotesque, night cow. Her mother beds herself in two, splits herself in four expanding into the milky way, her daughter riding her back. MoonCow Theatre Co.'s production blurs the line between human and animal, mother and daughter, sky and earth, inviting audiences into the milky ecstasy of liberation.

At a time when artistic communities across North America are reckoning with internal sexism and injustices, Wattam presents a bold vision of a world where queer and feminine creatures take flight and achieve dominance in the stars. **Bringing together Indigenous, Anglophone, and Francophone approaches, the intercultural production asks its audience to imagine: *what do liberation and connection feel like today?***

Originally written by Marchessault 1979, the text has historically been performed exclusively by Pol Pelletier, for whom it was written. Marchessault was a Quebecois Queer indigenous self-taught artist, creator and writer. Her work has a deep and lyrical ancestral voice, which celebrates words through myths and an indulgence of liberating poetic language. Her words subvert conventional modes of language and genre to carve out a space for her own sphere of action to take place, separate from the patriarchal traditions that contrived her foremothers. She emerged on Quebec's literary scene in the late 1970s, a time that was "marked by the dominance of the feminine," when feminist art was thriving and utopian visions of a female future felt possible.

In the years since, that female future has failed to materialize, and Marchessault's work, though critical, has often been left out of the Canadian feminist canon. **40 years after its inception, MoonCow Theatre Co.'s presentation of *Night Cows* reclaims Marchessault and her utopian vision, articulating it with contemporary magic:** a musical score that's both enchanting and unnerving, a set design that evokes the enticing mystery of a dark forest. This world is inhabited by performer Éléonore Lamothe, who draws on mask and clown techniques to invest her whole body and soul into our cow's journey through the sky.

Through the Montreal, arts interculturals (MAI) mentorship program, under the guidance of renowned director Micheline Chevalier, emerging Anishinaabe director Katey Lois Wattam, has developed a fantastical contemporary interpretation of Marchessault's seminal yet underperformed text on the 40th anniversary of its inception. She presented her vision during a three-night run at the MAI in May 2018, at short feminist works festival *Revolution They Wrote* at Mainline Theatre in Montreal this past March, and has been developing her work further for Toronto Fringe.

Night Cows is a story of Quebec's past, present, and future; a fantasy built upon reality; a flight you won't soon forget.