

# FOLDA

June  
4<sup>th</sup> - 7<sup>th</sup>

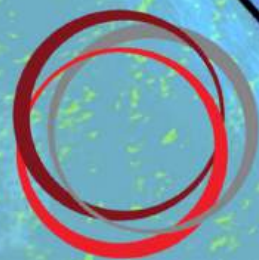
## The StartUp 2025

*Art for Better Times*

**EVENT  
DECK**



SpiderWebShow  
Performance



**CONNECTED MINDS**  
Neural and Machine Systems  
for a Healthy, Just Society



# WHAT IS THE STARTUP?

The StartUp is a four-day series of conversations that runs June 4-7, 2025 in Kingston. It is a space for artists, technologists, scholars, and audiences to consider the context of what author and UBC Professor Naomi Klein called *end times fascism* in The Guardian:

*"If we are to meet our critical moment in history, we need to reckon with the reality that we are not up against adversaries we have seen before. We are up against end times fascism.... we counter their apocalyptic narratives with a far better story about how to survive the hard times ahead without leaving anyone behind. A story capable of draining end times fascism of its gothic power and galvanizing a movement ready to put it all on the line for our collective survival. A story not of end times, but of better times; not of separation and supremacy, but of interdependence and belonging; not of escaping, but staying put and staying faithful to the troubled earthly reality in which we are enmeshed and bound."*



# FORMAT

In a time defined by urgency and polarization, we need spaces that resist spectacle and instead cultivate deep listening, reciprocity, and care.

We're structuring the 2025 StartUp around Breathing Circle Conversations, a participatory dialogue format designed to centre reflection, exchange, and collective insight.

In this format, a small circle of invited speakers begins the conversation, surrounded by a larger listening audience. Midway through, the circle expands as listeners are invited to step forward and join the dialogue, or continue holding space as witnesses.

Each conversation is visually documented in real time, creating a shared record of the insights and connections that emerge.





# ***The Canadian Context***

## **Wednesday, June 4th**

**Recital Hall – The Isabel 2:00PM – 4:00PM**

What does it mean to be an artist in Canada at this critical moment? What is our role as citizens and imaginers? How can we combat and provide alternatives to the apocalyptic narratives?

Conversation Starters:

- Brett Christopher – *Managing Artistic Director – Thousand Island Playhouse*
- Sarah Kitz – *Artistic Director – Great Canadian Theatre Company (GCTC)*
- SGS – *Manifesto for Now. Create Canada, Advisory Committee National Creation Fund*
- Lisa C. Ravensbergen – *Associate Artist, Full Circle: First Nations Performance, founder of the Maada'oonidiwag Canadian Anti-Racist Theatre Exchange*



The background is a colorful abstract collage. It features a large light blue shape with the word 'USA' in bold black letters. Below it, a yellow shape contains the word 'FRAGILE' in bold black letters. To the left, a white rounded rectangle contains the text 'The American Context'. At the bottom, there's a green shape with a black upward-pointing arrow. On the right, there's a white rounded rectangle with event details. The overall style is hand-drawn and artistic.

## ***The American Context***

USA

**Thursday, June 5th**

**Recital Hall – The Isabel 10:00AM – 11:30AM**

What is happening to American artists and other vulnerable communities? How can we demonstrate solidarity and or provide assistance? What strategies for resistance are successful?

Conversation Starters:

- Christine Quintana – *Newworld Theatre (CAN)*
- Lucy Simic – *Bluemouth Inc.(CAN/US)*
- Moe Angelos – *The Builders Association (US)*
- Ariane Michaud – *CRCI (US)*

FRAGILE





# Thursday, June 5th

**Recital Hall – The Isabel – 12:30PM – 2:00PM**

How can Canada play a bigger role in international culture? How are we perceived from abroad? What relationships and types of work could prove fruitful?

Conversation Starters:

- Clayton Lee – *Fierce Festival (UK)*
- Naomi Campbell – *Creative Producer, Professor, previous AD Luminato Festival*
- Gala Hernández López – *Connected Minds CFREF Artist in Residence (Spain)*
- Iman Datto – *Multidisciplinary artist (UK)*

**The  
International  
Context**



The background of the entire page is an abstract composition of various colors and shapes. On the left, there's a large blue shape with a pink neck and a pink circular element. To its right is a green shape with a blue circular element. Further right is a large yellow circle. At the bottom, there are pink and purple shapes. The overall style is graphic and modern, with bold outlines and a vibrant color palette.

# The Technological Context

## Thursday, June 5th

**Recital Hall – The Isabel – 2:30PM – 4:00PM**

Can digital tools be engaged for inclusive democratic outcomes. Silicon Valley emerged with a 'move fast and break things' approach that has mixed (or even poor) results for individuals and societies. Can artists move slower and fix things using emerging technologies?

Conversation Starters:

- Jared Mezzocchi – *2x Obie Award-Winning Theater Artist (US)*
- Laura Levin – *Associate Professor of Theatre & Performance Studies at YorkU*
- Patrick Blenkarn – *Co-founder of & Archivist for Videocan*
- Lisa Karen Cox – *Director, Associate Professor TMU*





***TOGETHER  
HERE & NOW***

## **Friday, June 6th**

**Laser Talks – Ingenuity Labs @ Mitchell Hall – 10:00AM – 12:00 PM**

Short, focused presentations from artists and researchers engaged with emerging technologies and urgent issues.

Presentations:

- Ronnie Cheng – ***“the lights will take you home 隨光尋家”***
- Zackary McKendrick – ***“Virtual Rehearsal Suite: An Environment and Framework for Virtual Performance Practice”***
- Caroline MacCaul & Deanna Peters – ***Interplay\_ festival of live online performance***
- Jay West – ***“How do we describe our work to the machines that help us?”***
- Shabnam Sukhdev – ***“Embodied Code: Feminism in the times of AI”***
- Sarah Garton Stanley, David Maggs and Owais Lightwala – ***Create Canada***





***TOGETHER  
HERE & NOW***

**Friday, June 6th**

**Building Better Times**

**Ingenuity Labs @ Mitchell Hall - 1:00PM - 4:00PM**

Open Space (Technology) session building off the discussions and ideas to come up with some steps to move ideas to pursue Art For Better Times forward. Think mini-unconference in a robotics and computer science lab.





## **Saturday, June 7th**

**Film Lobby @ The Isabel - 11:30AM - 1:00PM**

Gather in the beautiful second floor lobby of the Isabel Bader Centre with coffee and snacks for an informal talk about the future with a great view of Lake Ontario.

A low pressure way to connect without constraints on the last day of the festival.

***REFLECTIONS***



# FOLDA 2025 SCHEDULE

Wed  
June  
4<sup>th</sup>

**WindRush +  
Opening Reception**

8:00PM – 9:00PM  
The Broom  
Factory  
305 Rideau St

Thur  
June  
5<sup>th</sup>

**2021**

8:00PM – 10:00PM  
Theological Hall  
85 Stuart St

Fri  
June  
6<sup>th</sup>

**Kinnomics – Iman Dattoo**

5:30PM – 7:00PM  
\*Catered Reception  
The Agnes Garages  
207 Stuart St

Sat  
June  
7<sup>th</sup>

**Remixed**

1:00PM – 8:00PM  
Isabel Bader Centre  
390 King St. W

**Reflections and Refractions**

2:00PM – 3:30PM  
Isabel Bader Centre  
390 King St. W

**The MaryRobin Show**

6:00PM – 7:00PM  
Isabel Bader Centre  
390 King St. W

**ACCESS GRANTED  
TO ALL FOLDA EVENTS  
WITH YOUR  
STARTUP PASS!**

\*Additional performance times available, see full schedule at [folda.ca](http://folda.ca).



# 2025 STARTUP TEAM

## **Hosts & Curators:**

**Adrienne Wong**

Adrienne@spiderwebshow.ca

**Michael Wheeler**

Michael@spiderwebshow.ca

**Marcel Stewart**

Marcel@spiderwebshow.ca

## **Associate Producer & Point Person:**

**Seymour Irons**

Seymour@Spiderwebshow.ca

## **Operations Coordinator:**

**Rose Hopkins**

Rose@spiderwenshow.ca

## **FOLDA Main Base:**

Isabel Bader Centre for the  
Performing Arts

390 King Street West, Kingston, ON  
K7L 2X4, Canada

## **Festival Producer**

**Margaret Evans**

Margaret@spiderwenshow.ca

FOLDA.ca

# FOLDA

