

ONISHKA
PRODUCTIONS

okinum

*Beavers are the only species along with humans
to be able to leave a trace on Earth
visible from out of space.*

An imprint on the earth

A dam to protect

But only visible from the Stars.

Mazinibâkajige

Making marks on the bark

Mazinibâkajige

*Is the art of drawing images on the birch bark
with your teeth.*

Photo Credit: Claudia Chan Tak

Chemin
des Castors

OKINUM
onishka.org

In Anishnabemowin, *okinum* means *dam*. Inspired by a recurring dream of a giant beaver, **Okinum** is a multilayered reflection on dams as a symbol of one's inner barriers in the journey to break free. A tribute to the power of dreams and intuition to delve into the complexity of experience and multi-identity.

In an intimate space, interdisciplinary artist **Émilie Monnet** presents an immersive theatre experience in French, Anishnabemowin and English. Featuring a score performed live by musician Jackie Gallant, this captivating monologue deftly combines elements of autobiographical fiction and documentary theatre. Throughout the piece, dreams and memory flow into one another across time and space.

Photo Credit: Valérie Remise

OKINUM
onishka.org



"It's hard not to be moved by this piece
as an act of cultural reclamation and as a
harmonization of body and spirit"

Christian St-Pierre, *Okinum : un barrage contre le maléfique*,
Le Devoir, October 10, 2018 (Translated from French)



TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Premiere: October 2-20, 2018

Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui, Montreal (18 performances)

Duration: 1 hour 10 minutes, no intermission

4 people on tour (including 2 performers)

Onstage: Émilie Monnet (Principal Performer)
+ Jackie Gallant (Sound Performer)

Stage configuration: pentagonal central platform
+ 5 suspended screens facing the peaks of the pentagon
Seating surrounding the stage on all sides.

Dimensions: 10 x 10 x 5 meters (minimum required stage area)

Number of seats: 75 to 150

Set up: 8 h **Strike down:** 2 h

VIDEO



Full length video

password: AMIK

« Réapprendre l'anishnabemowin devient une façon de me réapproprier un pouvoir. De nourrir mon lien à ma famille et à ma culture. Ça réveille quelque chose d'important. Comme le sentiment d'être en train d'activer une mémoire. Ou de rallumer un feu. Je persévère alors dans mon apprentissage. Sur mon cellulaire, j'ai trois applications mobiles différentes pour apprendre la langue. Mais c'est surtout par le biais de ma pratique artistique que je me réapproprie la langue maternelle de mon grand-père. »

Émilie Monnet,
À découvert, 3900
Vol. 12

Photo Credit: Clark Ferguson

ONISHKA PRODUCTIONS

Working at the across artistic disciplines with an emphasis on theatre, **Onishka Productions** is an interdisciplinary arts organisation that creates bridges between indigenous peoples worldwide while honouring their diversity, richness and resilience. Founded in 2011 by Émilie Monnet, Onishka Productions creates, and presents interdisciplinary theatre and installation-performance works, favouring collaborative processes. Onishka means 'wake up!' in Anishnabemowin. In this spirit, we believe that indigenous cosmologies provide pathways towards sustainable communities. Through artistic expression, we can challenge how the realities and struggles of Indigenous peoples are perceived and transform the world we live in.

Founded by Onishka in 2016, Indigenous Contemporary Scene (ICS) is a nomadic platform dedicated to the presentation of Indigenous live arts locally and globally. Through ICS, Onishka works with Indigenous artists from different nations and territories with the goal of and amplifying their voices and fostering a space for conversations articulated around Indigenous perspectives.

EMILIE MONNET

At the intersection of theatre, performance and media arts, **Émilie Monnet's** practice is centred on collaborative creations. Her work has most often taken the form of interdisciplinary theatre and immersive performance experiences. As a writer, performer, and director, Monnet created *Okinum*, a piece which is firmly rooted in issues surrounding colonialism and Indigenous realities, particularly those concerning Indigenous women. *This Time Will Be Different*, her most recent installation performance co-created with choreographer Lara Kramer, was performed at the Festival TransAmériques this past June and at the Edinburgh Festival in August. *Okinum* marked the start of Monnet's three-year artist residency at Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui and announced her as a major talent in the Indigenous and Montreal theatre scenes. Émilie's heritage is Anishnaabe and French. She grew up in Outaouais, Quebec and Brittany, France, and she currently lives in Tiohtià:ke/Mooniyaang/Montréal. onishka.org

OKINUM
onishka.org

REVIEWS

"The multidisciplinary artist Émilie Monnet begins her residency at the Centre du théâtre d'aujourd'hui (CTD'A) with an equal measure of brightness and brilliance: Okinum immerses us in a dramaturgy as irresistible as it is captivating and profoundly brutal."

Éloïse Choquette, "Okinum : le paradoxe du castor [Okinum: the paradox of the beaver]", *Pieuvre.ca*, October 9, 2018.

"The entanglements of the artist's personal narrative, of her difficult hospital stays, echo everything that has been taken away from Indigenous people over the centuries, and lead to an assumed anger against the colonialist power relations that still endure today toward these peoples."

Raymond Bertin, "Okinum : La parole en offrande [Okinum: speech as offering]", *Revue Jeu*, October 12, 2018.

"Extraordinarily relevant, this touching narrative challenges the public to reflect upon the question of identity and the manner in which we perceive Canada."

Violette Drouin, "Okinum : guérisons multiples [Okinum: a multitude of recoveries]", *Le délit français*, October 16, 2018.

"The metaphor of the giant beaver and its dam is at the heart of this moving piece. The powerful, stirring voice of the performer pierces us straight to the depths of our soul."

Tan Bélanger, "Okinum : Et si les castors avaient le pouvoir de sauver le monde... [Okinum: and if beavers had the power to save the world]", *ARP Média*, October 6, 2018.

"Émilie Monnet, by way of her presence and vision, provokes in us many reflections. Her timeless message carries with it the power of the universal -- the universal that is characteristic of great works of art."

Charles A., "Okinum au Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui [Okinum at the Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui]", *Océane's Family*, October 9, 2018.

CREDITS

Writer, Translator, Co-Director and Performer **Émilie Monnet**

Co-director and Performance Director **Emma Tibaldo**

Co-director and Movement Director **Sarah Williams**

Sound Designer and Musician **Jackie Gallant**

Stage Manager and Production Manager **Elaine Normandeau**

Set Designer **Simon Guilbault**

Lighting Designer **Lucie Bazzo**

Costume Designer **Swaneige Bertrand**

Video **Clark Ferguson**

Anishabemowin Language and Cultural Consultant **Véronique Thusky**

Dramaturges **Élizabeth Bourget, Sara Dion, Emma Tibaldo, Sarah Williams**

Translation Dramaturge **Maureen Labonté**

Sound and Technical Director **Frédéric Auger**

Operator **HUB Studio - Gaspard Philippe**

An Onishka production in collaboration with Playwrights' Workshop Montréal.

A co-production with Imago Theatre for the English version of the play

Onishka received support from the Théâtre Aux Écuries and the Centre du Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui (Montreal) for the creation of *Okinum*.

The development of *Okinum's* script also benefited from the support of the Centre des auteurs dramatiques (CEAD) and the Gros Morne Playwrights' Residency (PWM/CEAD).

The English translation for *Okinum* was commissioned and developed by Playwrights' Workshop Montréal.

OKINUM'S PRODUCTION HISTORY

March 2017 - Tour of an early version of the show in Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina as part of Indigenous Contemporary Scene (ICS), organized by the Canadian Embassies.

October 2nd to 20th, 2018 - North American premiere at the Théâtre d'Aujourd'hui in Montreal, Quebec, Canada (18 performances)

October 13th 2019 - Musical staged reading at Le Diamant, Quebec City.

Spring 2019 - Development of English-language translation begins.

Fall 2019 - *Okinum* is shortlisted for the Prix Michel Tremblay, a prize awarded to the best script produced in Quebec during the previous year.

Winter 2020 - French version of script published by Éditions Les Herbes Rouges.

April 25th - 29th, 2020 - Les Tréteaux du Maroni, St-Laurent du Maroni, French Guyana

October 14th - 25th, 2020 - World premiere of English version at Centaur Theatre, Montreal, Quebec, Canada

November 9th - 16th 2020 - (In English and French) at the National Arts Centre, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

2021 - Canadian and international tours of both French and English versions.

CONTACT

Émilie Monnet
emilie@onishka.org

1 (514) 972-8299

Skype : [emiliemonnet](https://www.skype.com/en/contacts/emiliemonnet)
onishka.org

Art management & development
Machinerie des arts | Rachel Billet
machineriedesarts.ca

OKINUM
onishka.org