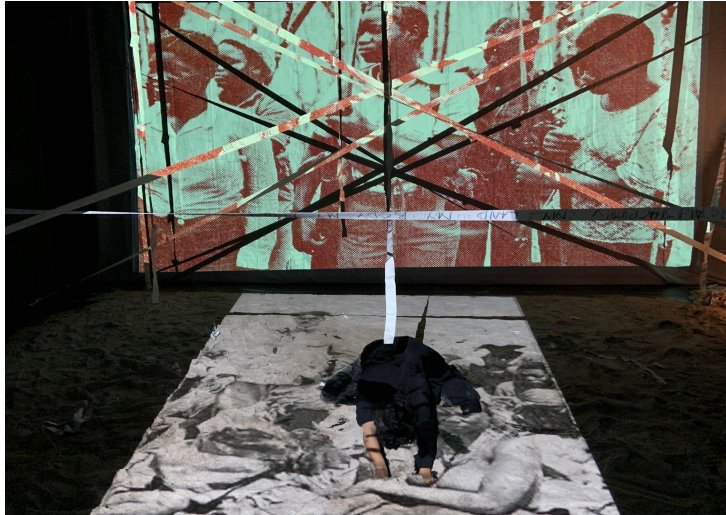


Kamwe Kamwe - Descriptive Introduction for Blind and Low-Vision Audience Members



[Image description: A kneeling performer bows, forehead to ground, in the middle of a stage covered with projected archival photographs of Black people with grave expressions. The floor of the stage is covered in sand, and long strips of tape crisscross the stage above the prostrate performer.]

Descriptive Introduction

Kamwe Kamwe is from Zimbabwe. The words “Kamwe Kamwe” translate to “One by One.” The performance evokes experiences of oppression, exclusion, and resilience. These themes are expressed through choreography, live singing, and projected images, rather than literal or graphic depiction. The intention is to highlight injustices while creating space for collective healing, reflection, and the affirmation of equality and justice.

It is performed by four Black artists from Zimbabwe. Their costumes are subdued: they wear neutral-toned clothing.

When the audience enters to see Kamwe Kamwe, the curtain is up. The stage is covered with a thin layer of sand and criss-crossed with many elastics. People who are sensitive to airborne particles are encouraged to sit further from the stage and/or wear a mask, because some dust will be created as the dancers move in the sand.

The elastics that criss-cross the stage are about the width of a seatbelt, and run in many directions. Some go diagonally from corner to corner near the back of the stage, making an ‘X.’ Some hang from the ceiling, not quite reaching the floor. One runs horizontally, stretching across center stage completely at about chest height. The combined effect feels like a tangled web.

The elastics make the stage intentionally more difficult to navigate. Words are written along the length of some of the elastics, but they are too small to read.

After a short curtain speech, the show will begin.

At the opening of the show, one performer lies face down in the sand. She slowly gathers her strength as the others sing, seated at the edges of the stage, lit by dim red light. An image is projected onto the back wall of the stage: an archival sepia-toned photograph of Black people with somber expressions. Their faces are turned away from the camera, looking into the distance, as if waiting for something. The same photograph is projected onto the sand and the man laying there, distorted because of the uneven texture.

Slowly, the dancer moves more, writhing in discomfort and eventually making her way to her knees, her forehead still pressed into the sand floor. Her movements are soulful, deliberate and slow. They match the feeling of the music beautifully. Over time, she rises to her knees, and falls again, still moving slowly and rolling over the sand.

As the English-speaking voice joins the soundscore, the projected photographs begin to change. There are pictures of anti-colonial resistance. A Black woman holds a rifle and young child. The dancer finally gets to her feet. Her fists rise shakily as she finds her strength, and walks to the edge of the stage as a second dancer, a tall man, walks with his head hung towards the centre of the stage.

In another black-and-white photo, a Black man is being dragged away by two white soldiers.

As the voices begin to layer over each other, the two dancers touch and pull at the elastics, which don't have too much stretch. Some break with a snap that shakes the whole web. The second dancer keeps his back to the audience, instead directing his movements to the photographs themselves, as if sending his power and care back in time to the people who suffered under violent colonial rule. He lifts his arms to them. His heart pours out to them.

The first dancer watches as the man's solo brings him to his knees on the sand, and entangles him with the elastics over the stage. Each movement is strong, deliberate sweeps of his arms over head, his feet through the sand.

Eventually, she joins him, and they duet together through the web, holding on to and pulling ends of elastics to support the dance of the other.

Other photographs cycle through. Some are more contemporary, and one includes a picture of a protest where someone holds an iconic "I can't breathe" sign from the Black Lives Matter protests. An older photo of a protestor shows a sign that reads "For freedom we shall lay down our lives. The struggle continues."

The dancing continues too, becoming quicker and more intense through the web, but just as devoted and passionate.

When the musician starts to use the shaker, the dancer rests and sings with her instead, sitting at her feet. The projections fade away, leaving just a dim red light around the singer at the edge of the stage.

When the singing stops, the male performer uses laboured steps to cross the dark stage, still crisscrossed with elastics. Once he makes it to the other side, the singer rises. Using slow steps, she takes center stage. Her final dance is stomping and rhythmic, staying on the spot, and looking out to the audience with power the whole time. When the dance finishes, she raises a single fist above her head, then turns away from the audience. Her hand drops, her head drops, and slow steps carry her off the stage, marking the end of the piece.

Contact PuSh

Please do not hesitate to contact Andrea, the Accessible PuSh Coordinator if you have any further questions about this show, or if you'd like assistance reserving accessible seating. Email her at access@pushfestival.ca or call 604-605-8284 x204.