

F-O-R-M 2021 Event Transcript
Building Collaborative Processes for
Movement-on-Screen

Monday, September 13, 2021

3PM PDT - 4:15PM PDT on Zoom



A conversation between movement and filmmaker duos Karmella Benedito De Barros + Lexi Mellish Mingo, and Kyana Lyne + Siam Obregón. Facilitated by Sophia Wolfe + Tamar Tabori. [Full event description in F-O-R-M 2021 Program Guide.](#)

Transcript by [Rowan Neufeld](#)

TAMAR TABORI: Hi, everyone. Thank you so much for joining us for the first –this is the first yeah– event of the festival this year! My name is Tamar Tabori. I'm the youth curator for the festival.

SOPHIA WOLFE: And my name is Sophia Wolfe. I'm the artistic director of F-O-R-M.

TAMAR: Today, for this first event, we'll be having a conversation with these lovely artists that you see here with us. We have Kyana, Siam, Lexi and Karmella joining us. Both movement and film collaborative duos– independently. Kyana and Siam, Lexi and Karmella...together.

Today we just wanted to gather them and talk more about their interdisciplinary approach to creating a film and what it's like to build a language through that. To be able to communicate with each other when you do come from different mediums.

SOPHIA: And another thing that's really unique about these duos [is] that they're both kind of really establishing their languages, in the last year or so, or maybe over the past two years. And so, both very, you know, starting to establish their own languages and ways of approaching this medium, so we thought this was a really exciting and kind of prime time to have a bit of a conversation and converse amidst each other to see if there're any overlaps, or how their approaches are shaping the work that they make.

Before we start, we wanted to take this moment to acknowledge that F-O-R-M is based out of and streaming from so called Vancouver and what is colonially known as Canada on the unceded and stolen traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwiltulh (Tsleil-Waututh) First Nations, and at F-O-R-M we always continue to reflect on and bring attention to connection through these bodies, movement, filmmaking, documentation and storytelling.

And just a few other housekeeping things. For those of you joining us, you are so welcome and encouraged to keep your cameras on, but please just stay muted if that's possible.

At around four o'clock we'll open the conversation up to you and if you have questions or if there's questions that come up on along the way, feel free to just put them in the chat and we'll try to get to them around the end of the conversation.

If you have any questions, Annie and Kayla are in the chat as well. If you have any accessibility needs or any technical issues, you can pop your questions into the chat. Just another friendly reminder that this conversation is being recorded and it will go onto our archive for this week and next week for audience people to access, and then it will be taken down for our own internal archive processes. Yeah, I'll let Tamar take it away. Thank you.

TAMAR: I'll give you even more context than we've already given you for this chat. Lexi and Karmella were actually commissioned artists last year and they made a film called *Where We Meet*. And what was really exciting for us about this was that they were two artists from different disciplines who came together and made this documentary style experimental film.

And this year we have Kyana and Siam, who are also commissioned artists and have come from two different backgrounds to collaborate and they actually have more than one film in the festival this year. We thought it'd be really cool to get them [in] a talk together because film and dance, in their own way, are already such different mediums and in themselves have different approaches to creating.

And then on top of that, when you bring those two things together it's a whole new world and a whole new way of approaching different roles and processes and hierarchies embedded in it, so we're really excited to hear more, especially like Sophia said, from these emerging artists. So they're just kind of starting out with

what feels like dance in film, although not a new field, kind of always feels like an emerging field. So, yeah, very excited!

SOPHIA:

So yeah, before we get into a couple of the questions that we have prepared, we wanted you all to take a second to introduce yourselves and let us know your pronouns and speak a little bit about your artistic backgrounds and a little bit about the films that you have made that have been a part of the festival or outside of the festival or that are going to be a part of this.

Maybe Siam, you want to go first?

SIAM OBREGÓN: Yeah. So let's see if I remember. So, my name is Siam Obregón. I'm very excited to be here. I go by she/her. I just graduated from film school last year so my training has been primarily film. I did some performance. [I] have some background in performance [from] when I was much younger. I'm still young, but much younger. Yeah so I'm basically more into the film aspect, right now. And what was the next question? I think that's it?

SOPHIA: Yeah, your artistic backgrounds, which you mentioned, and the film that you're a part of.

SIAM: So, at FORM we're presenting –Kyana and myself– are presenting *JONTAE*, which we did last year and *Roca Morena* which is a commissioned film by F-O-R-M. Thank you.

SOPHIA: Kyana, do you want to go next?

KYANA LYNE: Yes, hello everyone. My name is Kyana and I go by she/her. My artistic background is in dance. I've always been dancing...my whole life. I graduated from Ryerson's dance program in 2018, and then I moved to Montreal right away and since then I've been diving more into films. So, Siam and I were brought together to create *JONTAE* last year, which is in this festival, and [we] just finished doing our second collaboration *Roca Morena*, which was commissioned as she mentioned. And I would say that my practice is more around movement direction at the moment. Exploring, just moving. Yeah.

LEXI MELLISH MINGO: Hi, my name is Lexi. My pronouns are she/her. And I currently live and have lived my entire life on the unceded, unsundered territories of the x^wməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and

Səlílwəta?/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples. On my mother's side, I come from England, Scotland and Wales and [on] my father's I'm West Indian and Afro-Guyanese.

So yeah, my artistic practice has been with me for a very long time, I believe. In the context of this project, I went to [Capilano] film school for documentary film, and then I took a performance art class at UBC and so that's kind of what informed my place in this and I infill my focus on story, so not so much on like the cinematography side of things, but more of like story development and how we can bring documentary into narrative building.

KARMELLA BENEDITO DE BARROS: Tansi. Hi everyone, my name is Karmella. My pronouns are they/them. My people come from Brazil and came back to Africa through the slave trade on my Mom's side. On my Dad's side we're Treaty Six Mistawasis Cree. I grew up and continue to live on unceded, unsundered territories of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), xʷməθkwəy̓əm (Musqueam) and Səlílwəta?/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

My background is very unprofessional. I went to school for psychology, so I did not study any art or anything like that, but I've always loved film and photography—since I was really young. I got my first camera when I was like, 10 years old, I think.

So yeah, I'm very behind the camera, behind the scenes in my artistic practice. I just recently got into filmmaking as a more serious endeavour and not, like, making music videos with my friends..in the past couple of years. And outside of that I'm really into film photography, as well as music making and writing. And yeah, I worked with Lexi last year on a commissioned film called *Where We Meet* for F-O-R-M festival.

And this year, I was very grateful to be asked to make the territory acknowledgement or land acknowledgement film that will go at the start of every film screening for the festival.

So, that was really exciting to make...to get to tap into what a territory acknowledgement means and how we can all embody that, even in the arts community, in the film community, in the dance community. So that's me.

SOPHIA: Amazing. Thank you all so much.

So yeah, our first question was just basic...how did you both start working together. Each of you tapped into that a little bit, but I'm curious about how you met and how your collaboration started or what the inspiration was to make your first projects and what that initial kind of impulse was. If any of you are open to speaking about that.

KYANA: I'll take the mic for Siam and I's [sic] story. Siam, just come in whenever. I had applied to Festival Quartiers Danses in 2019 and I had proposed a solo piece [for] another dancer and it was meant to be a live performance. Because of COVID everything became more digital and the festival was able to provide filmmakers to collaborate with the choreographers and Marlene Millar, who is a Montreal based dance filmmaker who also knew Siam very well...just very intuitively matched us. And I met Siam on her porch, when we started talking about this project. After a few emails...so yeah I don't know if you want to add more to that Siam.

SIAM: Yeah, I mean, I really like our story. And you said it very well. I guess yeah, it was because of the festival that we were matched and, I think, Marlene had seen both our bios and our interests, then she was like these two people kind of, like, go together very well and as soon as we met each other it was just, like, instant connection and instant like, yeah...it was like really interesting to see someone else that was in a completely different medium that shared so much of my interests...and like, wanting to explore similar things in dance film. So we made our first film, and then ever since we're just, like, friends. Almost like sisters who speak all the time, so yeah. We look forward to continue [sic] working together.

LEXI: So, I think, for Karmella and myself, we met through a mutual friend and it started just, like, we were like homies. We ended up going to Hawaii together, which was kind of wild, and then we had a funny idea that we would start a zero waste, zero emission delivery service that would also connect artists, and it was just a big idea and we were like, let's just do this and we were like, this isn't creative enough. And so then Karmella, you invited me to do Vines festival. Right? Yeah.

And that—you want to [talk]

KARMELLA: Yeah, yeah. So in 2019 I think it was, um, was commissioned to do a performance art piece for Vines festival, based in Vancouver, and I decided to make a piece, kind of talking about the Trans Mountain Pipeline and the ways that the community around me I was seeing being impacted by the way that the government was funding the pipeline, and the ways that we were standing up for our rights and protecting the land. And so I made a very, like, mixed medium collage audio and video project for that. And I had this vision that I wanted to

project it onto a screen, because all of Vines festival is based in person in parks around the city.

And so I was thinking [of] projecting it onto the screen and having my film running and I was like, something's missing here and I figured what was missing was a person to really embody the story that I was trying to tell...kind of moving in front of the images that I was putting together. And I didn't feel comfortable stepping into that role, as I said before, I'm very, like, behind the scenes. And so I was trying to think of somebody who would be willing and interested in doing that and at the time Lexi was taking a performance art class at UBC. And I saw her—we went to a show together—getting down on the dance floor and I was like yes, this one. That's...that's for her.

So that's how we started working together and that was a really fun, collaborative project where, for the first time, I saw somebody, like, take something that I made and [you] just like made it your own [gestures to Lexi]...almost as, like, a translator, from what was in my head and what I created through sound, and visuals...she took and really embodied it in her movement and I thought that was so cool and I could never ever do that myself.

And so that just got me really excited to keep doing that kind of work and to keep collaborating in that way to see, like, how does someone take my idea and really move with it.

LEXI: Yeah, and then we ran into Sophia at Vines, I believe, and that's what prompted us to work on *Where We Meet*, which is the film that was in the festival in 2020. So yeah, kind of full circle.

KARMELLA: Yeah.

LEXI: Oh yeah and sorry, real quick...now we're kind of working on a project where we are offering workshops to folks—it's called the BIPOC Art Ecosystem. I thought I'd do a little plug there. That's about it. [laughs]

SOPHIA: Yeah. That's amazing. Yeah, I remember watching that piece at Vines and just feeling so moved by it, and thinking... oh these two, I don't know if they've ever made a film, like a dance film, but I feel like it could be really exciting to have them create. So I'm really, I was really grateful to Vines and just to have seen your work at that moment.

TAMAR: Mmhmm. Yeah, thank you so much for sharing your stories of meeting. It's so nice to hear and I realized that I didn't know them. [laughs] So I'm, I'm so glad.

And this makes me think of when you do meet these people and, you know, you decide to work on a project together, and especially with you two, and you can think of either your commissioned films or any films you've worked on, you decide to work on a film together. How do you approach those initial stages? How do you talk to each other about that? What does lead collaborators mean? Do you share the work equally? What roles do you take on? I'd really love to know how you kind of negotiated that and decided how to move through creating a film without it being, like, one person leading the way.

KYANA: Okay. I'll go. Yeah, for Siam and I it's interesting 'cause I think that for this, for our first film *JONTAE*, I was really wanting...I was in a place where I wanted to explore myself artistically, like, more behind camera, more choreographically as well. And so, I approached Siam with the idea of co-directing, and—me for movement and her for filmmaking— and as Siam mentioned earlier, we were just, like, we just really connected. Like our interests, and what moves us is very similar and so it [was] actually really fluid in the way that we started to communicate with the type of work that we wanted to make and what we wanted to receive from the work that we wanted to make. And so it was actually really a big learning experience to, like, learn a lot from someone who feels the same way but expresses it from a different craft.

So, I feel like I took on the position of more, like, a learner in this collaboration, and I feel like that really helped the whole process, because it just felt like we were both really open to each other's perspectives. And I think it created a really stable foundation for us to, like, hear each other, and I think we were just interested in each other's ideas and perspectives...and also, we really wanted to emphasize the whole process. And it was just interesting that from the beginning that's what we really wanted to focus on...and it just happened to be very fluid. I don't know if that really answers [the question].

SIAM: Yeah, that was beautiful. [laughs] Thank you. I guess...I don't have that much to add, it's just...I think that in general, filmmaking is such a collaborative medium and form and there's no, I mean there's ways to do it on your own, but there's also ways to be open so that everybody involved is, like, there fully. And, I think...yeah, I think—at least now—that we're in the process of learning, of exploration...the fact that we are both really open to each other like Kyana said just...makes everything flow really well. And like there's a harmony in what we do and how we communicate

and how we do [it], because it's very much based on steps, like we really like to go into the steps of the pre-production of, like, writing everything and just exploring. I keep drawing everything and Kyana just understands everything but, like in some way. And, yeah, all the way to post production...and it's a whole process of like, just seeing how we feel.

And also, understanding that there's the whole team involved and the dancers involved that are also having their own world in the process, and that their ideas are also very valid and I think that's what's really nice. Now, at least in the two sets that we've had so far, there's always been a space for even the camera operator to be, like, proposing things and of course the dancer proposes so much and, again, even the sound...everybody is so involved and I think we've been very lucky that in both cases, people have been just, like, committed.

SOPHIA: Yeah, that's really exciting this idea that, I mean, there's a vision, obviously with the two of you coming together and having those different perspectives and different sides and then remembering that the dancers [are] just as big of a collaborator, the sound is just as big, DoP. All of these people, just all of these brains kind of coming together. That's so exciting.

KARMELLA: Yeah, I think for Lexi and myself, there's a lot of similar themes and experiences that come up when I think about our collaboration together. Something that I really appreciated is that we share a lot of similar skills, like, I think Lexi is behind the camera, or has behind the camera experiences, as much as I do. We're both interested in story, we're both interested in production and editing, so every step was very collaborative...aside from me behind the camera, Lexi in front of the camera.

But yeah, it was very helpful that, like, I felt someone behind the camera and more on the editing side of things, like, we were still speaking the same language. But yeah, I think for us, how we kind of started was with story, and was connecting on a shared experience of being Black femmes on this land and that was kind of like a feeling, a shared feeling and a shared experience that we tapped into.

And so our stories...kind of unraveled through conversation and eventually those conversations made it into a Google doc and the Google doc was edited many times and eventually there was somewhat of a timeline that kind of unraveled...and a lot of our work was just, again based in experience, so wanting to translate some sort of shared experience through film and through movement and through sound, and just kind of building story that way.

LEXI: Yeah. And because this was our first film together, it felt like everything was in dialogue, like, we were always talking about things and always like, like we'd often run into a wall or a block and be like, oh, who is this for or, you know, can we represent all of these, like, like anything really...other than our own experiences, so I feel like we kind of just had to interpret each other's experiences and be, like, ready for a conversation around things. Yeah.

KARMELLA: Yeah, I think I learned a lot through making the film—about filmmaking, but I also learned a lot from making the film, just about myself and about Lexi and about the theme of the film in itself and I think we learned so much more than even made it into the film, which was a really meaningful experience...as well as collaborating with Isaiah Dobbs on sound. The way that we did sound was really cool, like, we would pick a song for each set of the film and in that set Lexi would write a poem about, like, how does that space feel and what is the story of that space, to help me understand, like, where we're dropping into here.

And then we just show up there and play the song, and Lexi would move, and then in post production Isaiah made a soundtrack based on that song. So it still fits the movement and still fits the way that the dancing is happening on screen.

And just, like, all of that collaboration, we didn't know what we were doing. We were just hoping that this works and it worked really well and I would definitely do it again.

LEXI: Yeah, totally. It was weird to add the sound at the very end and not be using it throughout the whole process but it was, it was great. Yeah.

I'm glad we did it that way. It kind of bloomed into what it is.

KARMELLA: Yeah.

SOPHIA: Oh, that's so exciting that's really, yeah, I feel...I'm trying to, I've been trying to form a question in my mind about...it feels like in Lexi and Karmella's film it was really from both of your experiences of, as you were saying, being in these bodies in Vancouver and the process feels like, what you're saying is that it stemmed, all the process, stemmed from that space and you were making decisions based off that, whereas in Kyana and Siam's film it was very much about—I'm speaking specifically about *JONTAE*—your subject Jontae, who the story was really about...it was, you know, your experiences and your perspectives, but also very

much his story, and his emotional space and what was happening at that time, because I know that you did it last year, maybe close to the beginning of the pandemic around Black Lives Matter and all of this very intense political space.

And so I'm curious about, you [Siam] spoke a little bit about, you know, bringing in different collaborators and all this, but about how that conversation was with the intentions of holding his story and holding space for his story to come out and how and where your creative voices would come into that story. That's a very roundabout way of asking a question that I'm not articulating well, but I hope that makes sense.

SIAM: Oh, you make perfect sense. I want to see if I can answer this in very few words. I guess, like, our intention wasn't necessarily to make a political film. We spoke a lot about just the idea of offering the space to Jontae to express himself and he was open to the idea as well and he was excited to also share through movement. So, it was just a matter of, like, we talked about developing a language in which we became prepared observers. So we basically offer humans safe space where we had a lot of, like, the entire preparation was some rehearsals, but also a lot of conversations and he was talking about a lot of things, and also talking a lot with the crew and making this kind of, like, environment or bubble in which, by the time we got to shooting the film, we were all kind of like in the right mindset. Like, the entire crew was just kind of understanding, not really knowing what to expect, but just kind of like, understanding that we were there as prepared observers, you know.

So it was interesting, because to me it was the first time I ever did that, and I guess it can be very theoretical and very, like, yeah, it makes sense in words but once you do it it's like how [is] that really possible. Like, is it possible or not, and in that case it really worked because we had talked so much, because we had so many conversations around it and, like, we were kind of really, like, embedded or –I don't know if that's the right word but– really, like, in the emotions that we wanted to put [in] for that day and it was four days of shooting.

And I remember it was very emotional and very confusing at times, just like, not knowing, really, what we were doing, but having faith and that...there was some structure and then eventually it all came together...the way it had to.

So I don't know if that makes...if that answers the question.

SOPHIA: Yeah, absolutely. I feel like both of you have spoken about bringing certain elements, or emotions, or intentions into the space when you're actually filming. It's not just about doing all this pre-production and then, like, getting on set and being like, "Okay, this is what's going to happen. It's all going to work out the way that we want it to," but really being there and responding and bringing that song in.

I don't want to speak for you Lexi, but from what I remember a lot of that was improvised movement and Karmella coming in and shooting in those moments and it sounds like it might have been a little bit of that, as well, for Siam and Kyana with *JONTAE* and kind of responding and just holding space.

So, just remembering that that's also such a big part of the production and what, kind of, gets translated into the final piece.

TAMAR: Yeah, through hearing you talk about stuff I'm really latching on to what Kyana and Siam said about it all being a learning thing, a learning curve and learning from each other. And it's made me curious about what is the...not one takeaway, but one of the biggest things that you've learned from one another. And this is for both of –all four of you. I was, like, does both of you make sense in this? [laughs]

Yeah, like what would you say, like, how did each of your own practices inform the other? And in connection to that, what did you learn from the other person that you would take away into maybe other processes, but also in your daily life...not just in art? Very big question. You can make it small.

LEXI: Yeah, Karmella and I kind of talked about this a little earlier but for us we—although we have similarities in the mediums we like to use and, like, the topics we like to talk about—the way that we create is sometimes different, so sometimes Karmella prefers to have a lot of structure I'd say, and myself I'm like, okay, stream of consciousness. I'm, like, I'll let it just come through me in the moment and so it was like a cool balance and I think that's something that we learned.

Sophia, you were talking about how our film...it was very much how we show up to a space and we respond to the space and for myself a lot of what I wanted to, like, evoke during that was the stream of consciousness and being...reacting to this space and interpreting a space, interpreting my, just like everything that's going on. And Karmella would respond with the camera and it, it was kind of trance like, a little, when we were doing it because it was in public and it was like...the world was going on, but I definitely had like, there [were] times where like, yeah, we'd like hit a

block or something and there needed to be structure, there needed to be communication and dialogue about things. And so I definitely learned how delicate a balance it is to have both these creative and free form elements, as well as structure and organization and that kind of care, because that is care too and so, yeah. How do you feel?

KARMELLA: Yeah, I definitely agree. I think for myself it was my first, like, big film project that I was working on and so, in my mind, also never having gone to film school, I was assuming all of these proper ways to do something. And really holding on to that, I think, at the beginning. Like, I heard about storyboards and I was like, oh my gosh, ok we need a storyboard, we need to know like every single shot for every single place that we're going and we had, I think, five to seven different scenes that we were shooting, so I was like, wow, that's a lot of storyboarding to do. We better get down to work.

And I think we tried doing it for one scene and we were like, this is not how, this isn't working for us, so where do we go from here. And I very quickly learned that it was really important for me to be having a good time throughout the process of making the film, like, it wasn't so much about doing anything properly, but more like, I'm here to learn and I'm here to have fun with my friend and we're going to make something really cool. And I'm going to let go of any expectations for things to be done a certain way.

And that allowed me to really just be a camera, and to just witness something happening, and to not have any control over that. And to really have fun...editing after to look back and see all of the footage that I collected and to also [have] been moving as a camera with the performer.

That was a really fun process and something that I don't think I would have naturally done otherwise if I was more like...I'm filming, setting up my tripod here, stepping away and making sure everything's correct and all of that. So yeah, I really learned from you [Lexi] to like, have fun during the filming process. And to like, not think too much about it.

LEXI: Yeah.

KYANA: I really resonate with you, Lexi, when you mention the practice of caring. I really feel like the way I wanted to approach the process with *JONTAE* and which I attempted to approach with *Roca Morena*, as well, is this...approach to making movement as just facilitating space for someone.

And I learned that through all of these discussions that I had with Siam and Jontae in my first process. And I feel like I've learned so much from Siam, in a way that, like, I guess I tend to be more dreamy in what I see and what I want to say or what I want to feel. And there's something so attractive to me in filmmaking, that really relies on a structure. And through this structure just gave us form, or concrete...or, gave me more guidance as to how to guide the movement for the specific moments in the trajectory, and how I saw it based on Siam's world of how she handled this thing.

[cat meowing]

I'm like, I guess one of the biggest things I learned is the emphasis on foundation because like I said, I tend to be kind of all over the place. And so, I realized through making a film that I really resonate with this idea of like, now I'm drawing, and then, like, kind of putting pieces together like this, and then it starts to make more sense in my brain.

So that's something that I really learned from Siam and also Stephen Turcotte who was the director of photography on our set –from both of them. Cinematographer. Yes, I'm rambling now, but I guess that's one of the biggest things that I've learned is, like, just the importance of really diving into just, yeah. –Do you hear my cat? [laughter] So sorry. He's a little kitten and he's very needy.– So yeah [laughs], structure and how I like to envision movement based on specific...stills that we imagine through the process.

SIAM: Thank you. It was perfect. Um, well there's so much that I learned from Kyana. I think more than anything, it's very exciting to be working with someone that just feels that we are, like, I don't know. I just feel like we're both feeling empowered by each other. And like we just trust each other so much in the process and it's just like, we know that we have the best intentions for the project.

And working...like the reason I want to continue working with Kyana, I guess, it's just that you know it's just such good vibes and just good energy in the entire process, and the curiosity of seeing how these two mediums merge is...it's like something that can be really overwhelming. And like, just knowing that you're doing that with someone else that is as curious as you and just as willing as you to, like, dive in...because what Kyana does, which I really admire, is like she goes into a [unintelligible] I guess like really fully in and it really pushes me to be the same and just, like, be at the same level.

And, yeah, I just feel like I can rely on someone like that and in film, from my experience, I've been lucky to be always surrounded by people that you can rely on as well...so, Kyana being a big part of that. And I think that the team has to feel that from the people that are, like, guiding the whole process.

And I think that's something that really works and I see that in both shoots. It was really nice to feel like the team trusted us, as well. And that was because I felt like we were prepared, or at least understanding of each other's kind of minds. So, I guess I can say that.

SOPHIA: Yeah, thank you for sharing. It's really interesting to hear, like, where both of the mediums influence one another. And, you know, Kyana, how you're saying you typically, you know, you come from a dance background and then for you to now see the visuals of the drawing—you mentioned some drawings—maybe you have stills that might have come, and then from there you can kind of see and embody or imagine an embodiment of the kind of choreography or movement that might come out of it.

And then hearing Lexi and Karmella talking about dancing with the camera and moving with Lexi in those moments and how they, how I feel like I can see – I'm seeing both of your films as you're talking– and really feeling those spaces of translation and movement. So yeah, thank you for sharing. Thank you for sharing that.

And I feel like it's totally always a...when you're kind of bringing two things together, it feels like it's always going to be ever shifting and changing, and sometimes the film aspect might take over one section a bit more, and then maybe the movement kind of comes out of another spot, and it kind of feels like this never ending flux of give and take between the two, and between the two of you, like, co directing this as well. Of when someone maybe takes over and when somebody is in front of the camera, behind the camera and editing and all of these spaces, so...I don't know what I'm saying, but yeah –

TAMAR: [laughs]

SOPHIA: –it's just exciting to feel the, like, synergy that comes from– between both of you as collaborators– and simultaneously, both of the mediums meeting as well.

TAMAR: And kind of jumping off of that. It's interesting to think about how this is, and kind of any process, is not linear and especially, I think, movement on film.

I don't think there's a right or wrong way of doing it, or like, this is how you should go about this. And so, especially, like, we brought you here...we were like, "you have been building a process together of collaborating" and I'm now thinking, okay, if you were to have another film to work on, like, you just got some funding right now, you have the ability to make it. Do you think the process that you would undertake would be similar or kind of the same as you have been working? Or do you find it would be very different?

Or, for example, with Lexi and Karmella,...you say that you're working on a workshop series. How [does] your collaborative process and making a film, kind of, feed into that? Are there any similarities? Do you find it to be very different? And with Kyana and Siam, because you made *JONTAE* and then we commissioned you to make another film, did you find that the process was very similar, or...very different, or kind of informed? I'm curious to hear [about the] future, or how the next steps kind of evolved from there.

LEXI: Yeah, I feel like there's probably parts that we would keep and parts we might leave behind, but something I know that we would probably—or I hope that we would keep—is the process of care and, like, always checking in and keeping dialogue because there's times in both of—in all—the projects we've worked on together where one of us, or both of us most times, have been like, I don't have capacity right now or I need you to help me or support me this way and so, like, always that's a huge part of it. And also just the openness and the openness for collaboration and perspectives growing, like, always bringing more people in. I think that, I don't know, for me, like, the more we collaborate in...the more we make things, I hope that we get more funding so we can bring more people in, so that it's not, like, only our own voices that inform our work, but also a collective of voices... like something growing.

KARMELLA: Yeah, I was gonna say the same thing.

I think that we've created a really strong foundation of collaboration between the two of us and like Lexi was saying, it's grounded in a space of mutual respect and, like, genuine care for each other as friends before we're even colleagues or collaborators. But yeah, with that, I would hope in the future that we can continue to work with bigger teams, and to work with more ideas.

And, yeah, I think in our film that we even made together *Where We Meet*, something that was really important for us was that we weren't just sharing our own

stories and perspectives and voices. We interviewed, I think, four people for that film that were included in the audio soundtrack, and then we had another person dancing in the film, Janessa St. Pierre, who did a beautiful job, and in our end sequence and in the end credits, we had all our friends dancing in the film and just, yeah, I think something that's really important to the work that we do is that we're uplifting as many people as possible and, like, bringing in as many people as possible.

So yeah, on a future film I would love to work with a bigger team where there's more people to learn from and more people to bounce ideas off of...because that's what makes the work feel special to me, I think.

LEXI: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It was cool inviting Kafiya and Janessa in to, like, be a part of the narrative and hear their perspectives too and of course Kafiya we also interviewed before...so it was, it was awesome because I think every single person we talked to, we probably changed our perspective a little bit on how we experienced our own experience or whatever a collective experience could be because I mean, who knows. But yeah, there was so much learning, so hopefully next time we make a film or any other project like that, we can just bring in more people...and I feel like that goes for the workshops too.

Like, we are totally all about bringing in more people and it being a learning experience and I think that it's accessible is, like, a big thing now for us. Yeah, when we're making stuff we want to make it accessible and also, like, open, like bringing more people in so that –because collaboration is so awesome and just, you know– bringing people together is great too.

KARMELLA: Totally, yeah. And I think film can feel really inaccessible to a lot of people and, like, speaking from my own experience not having a background in film but having an interest in it, I'm really grateful to have been able to work with you in a space that felt safe to not know what I was doing. And so I think moving forward, I would like to be able to create opportunities like that for other people too.

LEXI: Yeah.

SIAM: That was really nice. I think that's really interesting, you were talking about the idea of, like, having a bigger crew. And I think that's something that I was always also thinking, like, it's always just nice to be able to give a little bit of the producing part to someone else or just someone to, like, go get some lunch so that I don't have to think about it. Like, all those little things just really help, but at the same

time it's also really nice, to be on a small, small set in a small, intimate scenario where you can get to learn about all these different roles and, like, try to figure it out. There's some beauty in the chaos I find, but for sure I think I can, I can relate to that feeling of growing into a bigger crew where we can learn from other people and their craft[s].

It's always fascinating for me, like, I have only so much experience. I've only been [on] a few sets as directing and co-directing, and it's always been, like, so fascinating to see people really knowing their craft and knowing what they're doing and be like, "Oh, my god. I could never have done or thought about that," you know, like, "thank God you're here."

So, yeah, I guess for *JONTAE* and *Roca Marena* both processes were so different, so, so different and our lives...completely shifted from one year to another. So much happened and there was chaos in both years and in both cases. And I think, at least I can only speak for myself, but I learned so much from both experiences and I guess I was kind of expecting that our second film *Roca Marena* was going to be similar to *JONTAE* and it wasn't at all, like, there were so many things that were unexpected and so many things that I was just like, "Oh my goodness. What are we doing?" And time was just ticking, and again, in the moment it felt very intense, but now thinking back it's like, I think it was just a great opportunity for me to learn so much, and to see what, kind of like, prepare for future experiences and future sets and kind of anticipate.

So every experience, I think..yeah, just learning from that and taking the best out of that and in the moment for release for our second film there were some things that I can look back [on] and I can see where I can work to become a better collaborator or, like, better prepared for certain situations, but there's no way I could have known that coming into the project because it was new, it was a new experience.

So, yeah. Yeah. Kyana, do you want to say something?

KYANA: It was so well articulated, like, I feel the exact same way. Where like, I mean, everything you mentioned in terms of having a bigger crew to, like, to constantly feed off of everyone's energy and creativity...I found that so inspiring from both of our experiences collaborating together, which, you know, taught me a lot about myself as a creator, or artist in general.

If I had more funding I'd love to work with more dancers. So far we've done solo work, which has been really intimate and beautiful. But I know that I'm also

interested in working with groups of dancers and so that would be ideal. Hopefully in the near future. And not just for, like—oh I mean for the experience and also for that same reason of constantly feeding off of different artists all the time, and having ideas come together and creating a sense of, like, we need community inside of the process.

Yeah, both of our processes were very different. And I would say that a big part of that also was the fact that we filmed outside—our second film—so that was a big challenge to work with nature, whereas our first film was indoors and we had a fixed set for us to work from. And so, that [being outside] brought a lot of challenges where we had to kind of think really quickly on our feet while being quite, in the best way possible, like, naive in our crafts. I'm new to this, so it was, like, really interesting to all put our brains together in that kind of scenario, and kind of think about the best solutions possible with the skills and the knowledge that we all have.

Yeah, and I think moving forward...something that came to mind as you were speaking Siam, this—I agree with everything you were saying—is, I think, as we keep collaborating and as we keep changing as people and growing as people and as artists, like, our perspectives and our views and what we seek out of our work is going to change. And so I think the best thing about collaboration is the fact that it's— you can't really define it as one thing.

That's something that we learned just from this second collaboration is, like, how different it was and how much more we learned from each other as creators, and so I think that's really what I look forward to...is kind of growing individually as creators and then bringing those different life experiences and perspectives, and more refinement of our crafts as we get [a] bit older, to come together. It's always going to be changing, so that's what's really exciting for me. Yeah.

SOPHIA: Mmhmm. Absolutely. Thank you so much. Yeah, I feel like we could chat for hours and hours about all this.

But I just want to say thank you to all of you for sharing your insights and your collaborative approaches and giving us a little bit more background on some of the films that people may have already seen or are going to see.

I wanted to open up...if there [were] any questions from the audience. At this point, feel free to just unmute yourself or, yeah, raise your hand. That's perfect. Pete—and, yeah, we'll take another 15 minutes to kind of chat and respond. You can take it away, Pete.

PETE: Hi, can you hear me?

SOPHIA: Yeah

PETE: Excellent. One of the things I'm curious about is, like, just because how dance and film is really different and how expensive the DoP can be in different projects. Is that like I feel like the camera and the dances are...the cameras's just another dancer in the work, basically, they're able to guide..anyways, but like at what point do you start turning on a camera? Do you just always, like, sit there and just rehearse, without the camera present in the stage? And then once you get your DoP or yourself, you're like, ok, it's production day. Do you just do two days of shooting? Is that the practice you guys [have] always done or do you guys integrate the camera as early as possible in your work?

SOPHIA: Great question.

SIAM: Um, yeah that's a really good question. I feel like there's no right answer. I feel like there's so many ways to make film and, like, so many approaches.

And, at least for us, for Kyana and I, we are like that we do have a period of rehearsal of, like, conversations about what we want to do, what we were expecting from the day, what we're also letting go of some things, as things have to move forward. And then the day of, we have a specific camera with a specific crew, and we're there, both the cases were like four days, of just being on set, but we weren't recording the entire time.

So yeah, it was in a specific moment in a specific location. We press record and the dancer was just exploring in the space. But I think that what you're saying just opens up so much. I feel like, exactly, you could be so different, you can just grab your camera and shoot for like a week with a dancer and keep on exploring and like record the rehearsals and have that part be part of the film as well.

So yeah, but in our case it's very, the day of, we shoot. And then we move on.

KARMELLA: Yeah, I feel like the way that we shot our film was very non-traditional and maybe experimental in that it was very improvised. There was no...set choreography, so for myself behind the camera and Lexi in front of the camera, it was very, like, we show up where we planned on showing up, to the set and location that we'd determined. And then really grounding ourselves in that space

and like connecting to each other, and outside of that I was, I was turning my camera on the second Lexi was starting to move, understanding that that was a warm up time but the transition between warming up and between like, this is content that I think we can use in the film, like, that line was always blurred and I couldn't tell what it was until I was looking back at the footage.

And sometimes it's like there's something about the warm up where, like, that's perfect and that's exactly what we need in the film, and just kind of like letting it take as long as it needed to. I think sometimes we would take a break and turn the camera off and chat and Lexi would be like, "Do you have any prompts for how I could move differently in the space?" Or any questions to reflect and embody in the movement practice, or really like grounding ourselves again in the story of the place that we are. And just letting the full day of filming be an experience that takes as long as it needs to...which I don't know if that's proper or traditional, but it was really fun and it was...I liked that practice, yeah yeah.

LEXI: And I think that, like, we were aware of...we had a specific date to go to a specific spot and I think, like, we would have a song and a poem and forming, like, a conversation about, a meeting about that specific spot, like, each spot was intentionally chosen because of either history or our personal experiences in those spaces. So like, yeah even beforehand I remember I'd listen to something and my body would respond to the music. And then also responding to a feeling, so I think even though it wasn't choreographed, there was pre-meditation around that space, so even though it was interpreting the space, there was also equal parts of like memories that the body had, whether it was from the music, or the poem, or the space itself.

KARMELLA: So, yeah, yeah. I guess a lot of the work happens before the camera even turns on, but then being very responsive as the filming person behind the camera and really moving with Lexi was really, really fun for me and I think we both were very synced in with each other. And there was just a feeling of like, we're in the zone, or out of the zone and we need a break, or maybe we're done for today.

LEXI: Yeah, it worked really well. Like when the cameras on it totally just felt like we were there, like, you know, even though things come before that, it's like all is a part of it, but it did, definitely –even though it was premeditated– it did feel grounded in that time and in that moment in that space.

KARMELLA: Thank you for your question.

LEXI: Yeah thanks.

SOPHIA: Yeah, I feel like that's something that is so particular to your project and who you're working with, and the budget, as well as –you mentioned, Pete– who has access to what camera on that day. Maybe [you] only have the day to run the camera and all these kinds of things, so it's certainly...we have our ideals, I think, and what we want. And then there's the practicalities, as well, of time and budget and the project and what it means and more importantly so.

Do we have any other questions from audiences and, yeah, again, feel free to just unmute or type it into the chat. We'll give you a few moments.

Yeah, Pete. Go for it.

PETE: Sorry. Yeah, I'm gonna take this opportunity.

SOPHIA: Of course.

PETE: Yeah, yeah. What is it...I guess just for Lexi or any one else who performed in front of the camera. One of the things I felt personally is that, like, dancing is very, like, a virtual experience that, like, for some reason, the performance is kind of correlated with how you feel in the performance. And I think that the audience's presence, like, traditionally performers say, because they're sitting there, they're in the 3D space with you, and you could feel that connection.

But I guess when they're not there, they're basically like time travelers...you're actually in the future. You have to interpret their perception a little bit more intimately. Is that something that you could feel as a performer? That the audience might be a little bit close up to you or a little bit over your shoulder or something like that? Is that something that you experience as a performer?

SOPHIA: Great question.

LEXI: Yeah, that's such a cool question. I've never really thought about the audience in this process—actually I didn't...I tried to not think about it so much. But now that I'm thinking about it, I feel like futurism was kind of a big part of our ideas of, like, envisioning or imagining like, I don't know, a different experience with space and so for myself, I was trying to channel, when I was performing, connection to the place where I was at. And it was intense and emotional, like, looking back at it sometimes,

for me, is also kind of like, it's a little...it's just kind of weird and I guess you can say cringe, but not really...it's nicer than that.

But yeah, yeah. I feel like that's a really interesting thought for me to think, oh yeah, it really did feel like I was kind of...it was a very connected experience. I didn't necessarily feel like I was myself in that it was kind of similar to when Karmella and I did the Vines performance at the park, like I was channeling a feeling or something. Rather than feeling totally like Lexi, I felt like a character that was holding a story or something, or helping carry a story forward.

Yeah. But, yeah, thank you. I appreciate that question and anything that you [Karmella] think about that?

KARMELLA: Yeah, I think that experience of not being aware of perception through the times you were performing was something that I was also intentionally doing as the person behind the camera. So, like, the way that I was moving and the way that I was holding and conducting myself in the space, I was also trying to not be, like, I'm watching you, I'm perceiving you, you are performing for me, the camera, but more so we're performing together.

So there was no audience, really. Yeah, and I think that allowed –it took out a lot of pressure, I think, for both of us– and it made it more of a natural performance maybe. And I know Siam and Kyana, you talked about facilitating a space and kind of serving the performers through your work as filmmakers, and I definitely agree and feel like that's what I was doing for Lexi through our process of filming. [I] was just like..how can I help you feel as safe and comfortable in this experience so that you can convey the experience that you're trying to convey without pressure.

KYANA: Yeah, I guess what I can add to that, because I wasn't performing, but I was conscious of the ceiling. And it was...that's why the whole process was surrounded around creating or facilitating a space, [whereas] *JONTAE* is about who's the performer and who could feel like they could experience themselves more internally and put less emphasis on the idea of performing for an audience. That was a huge emphasis in both of our processes. So it was more for them to look inward, than to feel as if they needed to perform for the camera. It was this practice of feeling like this camera was more like a companion with them. Not necessarily as a window...for them to be something else than who they are. Yeah.

SOPHIA: Mmhmm. Definitely. I feel like that's a whole other kind of conversation to be had about the observer of the camera and... But I can definitely, certainly feel in

both of your processes the kind of levelness or equal playing field of, I'm not somebody from the outside coming in to capture this thing, but that I'm here with you and we both have these experiences or, we have a shared understanding of what we're trying to create and how...because the camera can feel like such a gaze.

And it's very clear in both of your pieces how comfortable the performers were in front of the camera and how they were, you know, maybe not thinking about it, or just being inside of their body and then it was the camera's job to kind of capture those intimate moments and that space. So, yeah, that's very exciting.

Um, I think we're just nearing time now, so I just wanted to wrap this up and say thank you all so much to our audiences for being here, and to the artists for sharing so much of their work, snaps all around. And you can catch all of their works this week.

So we have our only in person event here in so called Vancouver at the Vancouver Art Gallery off site on Georgia Street, which Kyana and Siam's film will be playing amidst sixteen other films, And it will be up for 24 hours a day from now until Saturday. Saturday, I believe? Sunday?

TAMAR: Sunday–

SOPHIA: Sunday, thank you.

TAMAR:–and it's Lexi and Karmella's film.

SOPHIA: Oh! sorry!

TAMAR: No, it's alright.

SOPHIA: My brain–

TAMAR: [laughing]

SOPHIA: –It's Lexi and Karmella's film *Where We Meet* and Kyana and Siam's film *JONTAE* will be playing on Thursday at our 5pm screening. I'm missing...what's the word–

TAMAR: And *Roca Morena*

SOPHIA:—*Roca Morena*. Thank you.

TAMAR: On Saturday, I believe. Which—

SOPHIA: Yes.

TAMAR:— will be the final screening, or second commissioned artist screening.

SOPHIA: Yes, the premiere of the work. And you'll be able to catch Karmella's film also, at the beginning of all of our screenings at 5pm, *Whose Land*.

So, yeah thank you so much to audiences, artists! We have a full week ahead of us, this is just the beginning. We hope you can join us for the rest and we'll see you at the screenings.

TAMAR: Mmhmm.

SOPHIA: Thank you so much.

KARMELLA, LEXI, SIAM, KYANA: Thank you! [waving]